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CHAPTER I

THE TAI : THEIR ORIGIN AND BRANCHES

The 'Tai' is a generic name denoting a great branch of the Mongoloid people of Asia. The Tai are the dominant element among the population of the Indo-Chinese peninsula. The present habitat of the Tai people extends from Assam in the west to Kwangsi and Hainan in the east and from the interior of Yun-nan in the north to the southernmost part of Thailand (Siam) in the south.

Wherever they have spread the Tai have acquired local appellations. In the four major areas of East Asia, namely, Burma, Thailand (Siam), French Indo-China and Yun-nan they are known respectively as the Shan, Siamese, Lao and Pai. The Tai groups and sub-groups in this vast region are known by innumerable other local names which, at times, tend to obscure their racial identity. There are many instances of the same groups being named differently by different peoples and at different historical periods. But the members of this great race, to whatever local groups they may belong, call themselves Tai.

Only in southern and central Siam the aspirated form from 'Thai' ('free') is used. 'Chai', a variant of 'Tai', is prevalent among the Laos. The local peoples generally known as

the Tai by their local names. The Assam branch of the Tai, for instance, that ruled for about six hundred years (A.D. 1228-1826) in the Brahmaputra Valley, is known by its local name Ahom. The other smaller groups of Tai people that came to Assam during a later period are known locally by their various local names, such as the Hkamti, the Hpake or Phakial as the Assamese call them, the Turong (or Tai-rung), the Sham, the Iton or Itonia, the Hkanyang and the Nora. But ^when asked for their racial identity they introduce themselves as Tai-Hkamti, Tai-Hpake, Tai-Turong and so on. Unlike the Hinduised Ahoms these later immigrants still preserve their racial habits and customs. They are to-day mostly scattered in the backward areas of Eastern Assam. They are all Buddhists.

Sir George Scott, a well-known authority on the Shans, gives an exhaustive list of Tai communities as known by their local names.¹ He also points out that "the branches which are indisputably Tai are known by a bewildering variety of names, which serve to conceal their identity." ✓

The Tai are a very ancient race and like other such races their origin is shrouded in obscurity. All that is said

¹ "such as Tai, Htai, Pai-i, Hoi, Huong, Tho or Do, Hkamti, with a very much greater number of local names, assumed by themselves or given them by their neighbours, such as Lao, Law, Hkun, Lu, Tai-long, Tai-noi, Tai-mao, Tai-no, Tai-man, Tai-hke, Tai-loi, Tu-tai, Pienong (or Nung), Pu-man, Pu-ju, Pu-chei, Pu-en, Pu-yiei, Pu-sui, P'o Pa, Shui Han, or Hwa Pai-i, Pai-jen, Yu-jen, P u-man, Pai, Hei or Hwa T u-lao, Nung or Lung-jen, Sha-jen, Hei or Pai Sha-jen, Minchia, Shui-chia-chung-chia, and many more still more purely local." - George Scott and Hardiman : Gazetteer of Upper Burma and the Shan States, Part I - Vol. I, Rangoon, 1900, pp. 127-8.

about their origin and development in the early period by modern writers is largely based on legendary accounts contained in ancient books. Hence these writers, in attempting to construct an historical narrative of the early periods of this race out of the available data in fragments and fables, have had to resort to conjectures and interpretations on many points. One of the most eminent scholars in this field, Professor M. Terrien de Lacouperie, from his close study of the Chinese records, asserts that "the cradle of the Shan race was in the Kiulung mountains, north of Set-chuen and south of Shensi, in Chins Proper."² Probably the progenitors of this race, being driven by the hardships of the semi-desert North in the regions about Mongolia, migrated to the south at an early period following the courses of the Yellow River. Dr. E. Laufer, Curator of Anthropology, Field Columbian Museum, Chicago, traces that "the early home of the peoples of eastern Asia was in the Upper reaches of the Hoang-ho or Yellow River of China, and that from this center the Tibetans migrated westward ; the early tribes of Indo-China, southward ; and the Chinese southeastward."³ According to Max Muller the original seat of the Tai or Siamese branch of the Indo-Chinese peoples, called Shan by the Burmese, was in Central Asia and it was from that area that these people were the first to migrate towards the south and settle among

² A.R. Colquhoun : Amongst the Shang : London, 1885, "Introduction on The Cradle of the Shan race" p.lv.

³ Dr. Laufer's note to Rev. H.I. Marshall, Jan.6,1920 referred to by the latter in his book The Karen People of Burma, 1922, (Ohio State University), p.6.

the rivers Mekong, Menam, Irrawaddy and Brahmaputra.⁴ The history of their migration is a history of long centuries of struggle which they had to carry on against both the Chinese imperial pressure from the north and the powerful neighbours in the south resulting in a succession of glorious periods of their supremacy in China, Burma, Laos, Assam and Siam down to the modern period.

It has been brought to our notice by recent researches that the Tai were ruling in Central and Eastern China with a comparatively advanced culture long before the formation of the so-called "Chinese race." In fact, the Chinese race is the product of a gradual process of amalgamation of many separate peoples belonging to different races including the Tai.⁵ But the real home of the Tai peoples, or rather the region where they developed as a distinct race, had been in South-west China whence, in course of time, under the pressure of the Chinese and the invading Mongol hordes they had to move in successive waves towards the south fanning out along the courses of the great rivers, the Irrawaddy, the Salween, the Menam, the Mekong and even the Brahmaputra consolidating their power over these areas. Thus sprang up, in course of time, numerous Tai States in the extensive river valleys of the Indo-Chinese peninsula, some acknowledging the nominal suzerainty of China, Burma or Combodia, while others developing into independent kingdoms under their powerful potentates. Of the Tai

4 Arthur P. Phayre : History of Burma : 1883, London, pp. 6-7.

5 W. Feberhard : History of China, 1950, London, Introduction, xiv.

States of earlier periods, particularly those that flourished before the sixth century A.D., systematic history is no longer available ; only the names of some are mentioned in the extant records with scanty details in the form of stories.

Explanations so far given by scholars about the origin of the racial name Tai, or Thai, as pronounced in southern and central Siam, are not conclusive. But the latter word 'Thai', used in the sense of 'free' or the free people, has a history of its own in the traditions of Thailand (Siam). It is said that in the seventh century A.D. a Tai prince, named Phra Ruang, was the ruler of Sangkalok (Svargalok), a principality of Zimme (Chiengmai). He was a tributary chief under Cambodia, which at that time was supreme in south Indo-China. In A.D. 638 this prince rebelled against the ruler of Zimme and seized that State overthrowing the suzerainty of Cambodia. He proclaimed himself sovereign of Zimme, ^{over the Tai} ~~mastered the~~ people, liberated from the Cambodian yoke, ~~and started the Siamese national~~ and started the Siamese national era, which dates from A.D. 638. Bishop Pallegoiz is of the opinion that this took place "in the year 1000 of the era of Phra Khodom."⁶ Phra Ruang is mentioned in the Siamese Annals as a national hero of the Thai people. But the Phra Ruang Dynasty, so founded, did not last long. It was overthrown during his son's rule by the king of Kiang Tsen.⁷

⁶ Phra = the Buddha, Khodom = Gotama.
Cushing : Grammar of the Shan Language : Rangoon, 1887,
Introduction, p. 3.

⁷ Helt S. Hallett : "Historical Sketch of the Shans"
in Colquhoun's Amongst the Shans, 1885, pp. 344-45.

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This appears to be the earlier history of the Phra Ruang Dynasty. But the dynasty is said to have reappeared in the thirteenth century at Sukhodaya (Sukhot'ai) in the person of Sri Indraditya, who firmly established his dynasty in that State by ousting the Cambodians. Bishop Pallegoix says that after Phra Ruang had freed the country from the Khmers, 'the Saiam took the name of Thai, which signified "free"'. This explanation is generally accepted by other scholars who want to explain the origin of the term Thai. Phra Ruang, in this later period, seems to correspond to both Indraditya (ca. 1256-75) and his son, Rama Khamheng (ca. 1275-1317), but, as pointed out by Briggs, the name is sometimes applied to other kings of Siam. Phra Ruang was probably a patronymic title of the rulers of the dynasty. It is believed that in this case Rama Khamheng is certainly meant. If so, the date of the appearance of the form Thai or T'ai, in the written language, can be placed between A.D. 1292, when the form Dai appears in the inscription of this monarch, and A.D. 1317 the probable date of his death. In the context of the events of the earlier history of the Phra Ruang Dynasty the later use of the term Dai or Thai by Indraditya or Rama Khamheng may be called only as its revival or rather restoration. Sukhodaya was, until ~~the time of~~ its emergence as an independent Thai State, the northern capital of the Cambodian Empire. Thus the application of the term Thai marked the liberation of the Tai people in the Menam Valley from the Cambodian yoke. Further the word had its origin in the Upper Menam Valley, though now it has its currency mainly in

southern Siam.

According to some authorities the word 'Tai' as used from ancient times, comes from the Chinese word 'Ta', which means 'great'. Gait has also suggested almost a similar meaning of the word. According to him, 'Tai' means 'glorious' corresponding to Chinese 'celestial'.⁸ But it seems improbable that the appellation 'Tai' signifying great or glorious or heaven-born could be of Chinese origin. To the Chinese these people were 'southern barbarians'. Recently Nai Likhit Hoontrakul⁹ of Siam, from his researches in the Chinese sources, has thrown new light on this point. He traces the origin of the racial name Tai to an ancient official title giving certain rights and privileges to its holder. It was Seow-Hao (2nd Emperor : 2596 - 2513 B.C.), the second son of Huang-ti, the first Emperor of China (2697 - 2596 B.C.) and uncle of Yuan-yok (3rd Emperor : 2512 - 2435 B.C.), whose descendants received the title of Tai or Tai-Tai which carries with it the full right to levy duties on the waterways.¹⁰ Emperor Yuan-yok, the grand-son of Huang-ti, created a Tai family with a hereditary Tai-Tai title by conferring the title upon his

⁸ History of Assam : Calcutta : 1926, p. 246.

⁹ L. Hoontrakul comes from a prominent Sino-Thai family of Hainanese descent.

¹⁰ L. Hoontrakul : The Historical Records of the Siamese-Chinese Relations : Bangkok I 1953, p. 13.

nephew General Sin-How, who was apparently the grand-son of Seow-Hao. General Sin-How received the title for a victory which he had won over a powerful minister named Kung-Kang, who had led a rebellion against the Emperor with the object of usurping the throne. The title of Tai gave Sin-How and his descendants the right to impose on and collect duties from all who used the waterways of the Poon, (or Phen), the earlier name of the Hwang-Ho¹¹ or Yellow River, which flows through the provinces of Shan-si and Ho-nan. The enjoyment of the Tai-Tai's hereditary right is said to have ended with the ascendancy of the Hia Dynasty (2205 - 1766 B.C.).

Thus the 'Tai' first appeared in the Chinese history in Shan-si and Ho-nan as early as 2515 B.C. The Tai-Tai was the only hereditary title of rank enjoyed by the highest aristocracy in ancient China and was regarded "as the first Tai, which led to many subsequent Tai titles, without the heritable rights, but accompanied by its meaning of honour, created in subsequent periods as Choung-Tai (Minister), Chi-Tai (Viceroy), Tung-Tai (Under-Secretary of State), Pu-Tai (Provincial Governor), Git-Tai (Provincial Chancellor), Pan-Tai (Provincial Financier), Tien-Tai (Provincial Commander-in-Chief) and Tao-Tai (Intendent of Circuit or Regional Governor)"¹² "This Tai means", says Hoontrakul, "a high stage or tower or a respectable and independent personage in address. The word is highly regarded

¹¹ Hwang : Yellow, Ho : river.

¹² L. Hoontrakul & op.cit., pp. 14-15.

as meaning freedom and well beloved in the soul of Tai people upto present day".¹³ Thus Tai, in course of time, came to carry the sense of high or great in position, which necessarily implied possession of great power and hence freedom from political subjection. When Phra Ruang, in the seventh century used the term 'Thai' to mean the 'free people' he probably did it in this sense of the ancient word Tai.

The above history of the word Tai shows that the Tai belong to the race of early Emperors of China. From Hwang-Ti to Shih-Wang-Ti all the early Emperors are called Chinese in the books on China. But modern scholarship appears to reject the idea of the Chinese having ever flourished as an imperial power in the third or even the second millennium B.C. Though both the communities are of common Mongoloid origin and akin to each other, yet recent researches in the archaeology and history of China disclose the startling fact that the Chinese, as such, did not appear on the scene as a great ruling power before the first millennium B.C. In this background the Tai have undoubtedly a claim to greater antiquity in China as a ruling race than the Chinese.

According to Professor Coedes 'Tai' or 'Thai' is synonymous with the name 'Dai'. In the inscription of King Rama Khamheng of Sukhot'ai, dated 1292, which is said to be the first known specimen of Tai writing in Indo-China, the name of the language and the people is represented by symbols, which Coedes,

¹³ Ibid., p. 16.

who made the literal translation of the inscription into French, translates as Dai.¹⁴ It is further held that 'Dai' was probably the name of the Tai prior to the separation of the three linguistically and ethnologically closely allied groups of the Thai, Kadai and Indonesians somewhere in Yun-nan more than three thousand years ago.¹⁵ But in view of what has been said above about the origin and antiquity of the word Tai - a date more than 4,400 years from now - the word Dai appears to be a later corruption of 'Tai' in certain parts of East Asia. Even to this day the basic word Tai or its aspirated form Thai, and not Dai, is universally used by this race of people to refer to itself everywhere irrespective of their various local names.

Cushing, who worked many years among the Shans, says Tai is the regular form and the writers of the Burmese Shan school agree. Briggs says that the French do not seem to agree among themselves on the point. But Maspero and some others seem to accept Tai as the generic name of the people, but adopt the aspirated (Thai or Thai) form for the name of the language. Bishop Pallegoix, a French missionary who served many years in Siam and wrote a dictionary of the language, explains Thai by saying that after Phra Ruang had freed the country from the

14 Lawrence Palmer Briggs : "The Appearance and Historical usage of the Terms Tai, Thai, Siamese and Lao" in Journal of the American Oriental Society, vol. 69, No. 2, April - June 1949, p. 61. Also George Coedès, Recueil des inscriptions du Siam : 1. Les inscriptions du Sukhodaya 47-8 (Bangkok, 1924).

15 JSS, vol. XL, pt. 1, 1952, pp. 75, 80 for reference to G. Coedès : Les langues de l'Indochine, 1948.

Khmers, 'the Sajam took the name of Thai, which signified "free",¹⁶ as already mentioned above. But Briggs points out that this explanation is older than Pallegoix. It may be noted that the term Thai was first applied, according to the French authorities, only to the inhabitants of the ancient kingdom of Sukhot'ai, and this was precisely the region to which the terms Syam, Sajam, Siem and Sien (Hsien), which finally resulted in Siam, were originally applied.¹⁷ Thus the name Syam or Sajam¹⁸ in Sukhot'ai appears to have preceded the name Thai, not Tai. The Tai of Sukhot'ai, however, have not left any account of their early history to enable us to solve this question beyond all doubts and more authoritatively.

It is remarkable that the Indonesians of Hai-nan call themselves Hiao in the centre and Dai in the southern part and Li and Lai in the south-western part and these groups are said to speak different dialects which may have sprung originally from the same language. Paul Benedict's researches have led to the discovery that close linguistic affinities exist between the Thai, Kadai and Indonesians.¹⁹ Again 'Dol' or 'Dioi' is said to be another name for 'Dai' and the former might have arisen from the

¹⁶ JAOS. vol. 69, 1949, p. 62 ; Mgr. J.B. Pallegoix: Description du Royaume Thai, ou Siam 2. 64 (Paris, 1854).

¹⁷ Briggs : ibid., p. 62.

¹⁸ In Tai y and i are often interchangeable. It is also said that in Malay, the word for 'brown race' is said to be Sajam (Pallegoix, 1.5) or Sagam (Anna Leonowens, Romance of the harem 1).

¹⁹ Paul Benedict : "Thai, Kadai and Indonesian, a New Alignment in South-east Asia", American Anthropologist, vol. 44, 1942.

phonetic variation of the latter word. But 'Doi' means a hill or mountain not only in the northern Siamese language but also in the languages of the northern Tai, such as that of the Ahoms of Assam. The words 'Tai' and 'Doi' mean also companions or comrades in the Ahom language. Erik Seidenfaden is inclined to believe that 'Li', 'Lai' and 'Loi' are but the other forms of 'Day' or 'Dai'. In plenty of cases Ahom da becomes la in Shan, both being two branches of the same original Tai language. As for instances, Ahom dai (thread), doi (mountain or hill), den (moon), dao (star) become respectively lai, loi, lun, and law in Shan. Hence the above change from 'Dai' to 'Lai', 'Loi' or 'Li' is quite possible. The distinguished French orientalist M. Paul Mus, after a careful examination of the vocabularies prepared by Father Savina²⁰ says that the 'Dai' or 'Li' language contains many Thai elements. It must also be known that Hai-nan is mentioned by the ancient Chinese writers as the land of the 'barbarian Li people'. Monsieur Bons d'Anty, the consul for France in Canton, who had many opportunities of studying the race, believes that the Li, the inhabitants of the interior of

²⁰ Published in the Bulletin de l'Ecole Francaise d'Extreme - Orient, vol. XXXI, pp. 103-9 under the title "Lexique Day Francaise" i.e. a French-Day Dictionary and also a comparative table of the two Day dialects.

Hainan, are pure Tai.²¹ Fr. Savina²² actually found in the Hai-nan island a Tai community, locally called Ong Beor Bae, with a population of 400,000.

THE SHANS :

The name or rather the title 'Tai' undoubtedly refers to the race whereas the designation 'Shan', said to be of Burmese origin, means probably "Highlanders". But actually the Burmese Shans are the descendants of the ancient Tai - Yai, the Great Tai, and all legends agree on this.²³ The Mon records mention contingents from the Shan States of the mountainous country beyond Burma proper entering and invading Upper Burma. Sometimes they refer to the invaders simply as 'Shans'.²⁴ It may be noted that the word Shan in Chinese means a mountain or highland and to the Burmese the Shans were merely the people, who descended upon the plains of Upper Burma from the Shan States or Hill States of the southern Highlands of Yun-nan,

21 J. George Scott and Hardiman : GUBSS. 1. 1. p.187.

22 The late Reverend Father F.M. Savina lived in Hainan for more than four years from 1924 to 1928 and travelled widely. He was a real polyglot and was able to converse with the natives in their own tongue. He wrote among others a monograph on Hainan with its title Monographie de Hainan. He specially studied the Li tribes of Hainan. He broadly classified the population of the island (about 2,000,000) into three groups locally called the Hok-lo, Ong Beor Bae and Hiao-oo or Day. The Hok-lo are Chinese who occupy the northeastern part and all the coast line, the Ong Beor Bae are Tai who occupy the northwestern and the Li tribes the central parts of the island and the Hiao and the Dai, supposed to be Indonesians, occupy respectively the central and southern parts. Major Erik Seidenfaden's Note on the Rev. Fr. Savina, JSS, vol. XL, pt. 1, 1952.

23 JIOS, vol. 69, 1949, p. 64.

24 D.G.E. Hall : Burma, London, 1950, p. 31.

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a country predominantly of Tai population, particularly the areas adjoining the Northern Shan States of Burma. The Burmese probably referred to these people as Shan after the Chinese Shan-tse and Shan-yen meaning "highlanders".²⁵ As referred to above the Tai are also called Doi, which means a mountain or a hill. The Chinese name for the Tai people of this area is Pa-i. 'Pa' in Chinese means 'cultivated highlands' and 'i' means 'barbarians'. Hence Pa-i means barbarian or non-Chinese cultivators of the highlands of Yun-nan.²⁶ It is said that the Burmese originally learnt the terracing of hill slopes for cultivation from the Tai cultivators of Nanchao in Yun-nan.²⁷ It appears that Chinese 'Shan' was Burmanized into 'Shan' and written as Shan as the Burmese words ending in m are usually turned into n. But the peoples, referred to as Shans in Burma, called themselves only Tai.

Mr. A.R. Colquhoun, who made extensive travels of exploration in the Southern provinces of China, found that most of the aborigines of that region were shans although the Chinese called them by various nicknames. Their propinquity to the Chinese is largely responsible for their gradual change in habits, manners, and dress and their absorption by that people.²⁸ What is true of the Shans of China in this respect

25 Shan : highland, tse and yen or jen : man together meaning hillmen or highlanders. A.H. Keane : Man : Past and Present, edited by Quiggin and Haddon, Cambridge, 1920, p. 191. Refer also to Dr. A.H. Keane's contribution on the Shans in The Living Races of Mankind, London (Hutchinson & Co.) p. 173.

26 Colquhoun : op.cit., p. 207.

27 D.G.E. Hall : A History of South-east Asia, London, 1955, p. 123.

28 Hallett : Historical Sketch of the Shans in Colquhoun's Amongst the Shans, p. 328.

is also true of the Ahoms of Assam and many of the Shans of Burma outside the Shan States. The Ahoms took to the Hindu ways of life and many Shans of Burma to the Burmese ways in dress, language and culture. Particularly in the fashion of their clothing the North-western Shans have assimilated themselves to the Burmans in the midst of whom they live.²⁹ But yet the racial identity of the Tai-Shans is recognisable from their physical type, colour, tradition and history.

The Burmese gave the appellation 'Shan' to those Tai that entered the plains of Burma in the thirteenth century A.D.³⁰ This apparently refers to the period when Kublai Khan's invasion of Ta-li in 1253 caused a mass migration of these people, mostly as refugees, into the Shan States of Upper Burma and the Upper Menam Valley in Siam. But the word Sham or Shan must have been formed and used at a date much earlier than this. During the early centuries of the Christian era the peoples of Burma almost certainly knew the Tai as Taroks or Tayoks (but written as 'Tarops'). There is mention in Burmese history of two irruptions into Burma by the Taroks³¹ from Yun-nan, one not long before the Christian era and most probably during Binnaka Raja's reign in old Pagan in the first quarter of the sixth century B.C. and the other about A.D. 241 or

29 Alleyne Ireland : The Province of Burma, vol. 1, 1907, pp. 63-4.

30 Harvey : History of Burma, Calcutta, 1925, p.4.

31 In Burmese Tayok or later mentioned as Shan-Tayok.

probably A.D. 225. According to Cushing, an eminent authority on the Shans, these invaders could not have been Chinese, for the Chinese did not establish any real connection with the Burmans until after the conquest of Yun-nan by Kublai Khan in the thirteenth century. These Taroks must have been the Tai, who were in that period the most predominant people in Yun-nan. Cushing is of the opinion that the irruptions mentioned here seem to indicate the presence at those early dates of a powerful Tai kingdom or kingdoms in Yun-nan, whence the invaders were sent.³²

Of the earlier migrations of the Tai into Burma that of the sixth century A.D. is of historic importance. These immigrants from South-west China, who were not, however, known as Shans, advanced westwards along the river valleys of Upper Burma and conquered the territories then under an Indian dynasty, whose capital was at Tagaung and about whom more would be told later. What is noteworthy here is that all these invaders, who came and established their political supremacy over Upper Burma, called themselves Tai as found in the ancient Chronicles. As they entered Burma immediately from South-west China they may be designated more specifically as Tai-Khe or Tai-Che. Major Davies points out that it is in the Shan States of Burma and also perhaps of its eastern neighbourhood that these Chinese Shans are so called. The Chinese Shans generally call themselves Tai No or Northern Tai (Shans), while they refer to the

³² Dr. Cushing's Monograph on the Shans : vide Mr. H.L. Eale's Report on the Census of Burma, 1892, p. 200.

inhabitants of the Shan States as Tai Tau, Southern Tai (Shans), and not Tai-Long, Great Tai (Shans). A few Tai Tau also exist in Yun-nan close to the Burmese border in Meng-ting.³³ The Tai-Khe or Tai-No branch of the Tai is also known in the Shweli river valley as Tai-Mao or simply as Mao. But Sham or Shan is a distinctive appellation used by the Burmese to refer to the Tai immigrants of a much later period and under different circumstances. According to an eminent writer 'Shan' appears to be the collective Burmese name given to all different Tai peoples that entered Burma just as 'Lao' is the collective Siamese name for the Tai peoples formerly subject to Siam and since 1896 who became mostly French subjects.³⁴ In this sense the appellation 'Shan' is more political than purely ethnical and represents the nation as distinguished from the different groups constituting it. Even the Thai people of Siam are called Shan by the Burmese. To the Annamites they are Kiem, which is perhaps a variant of Siam. Major H. R. Davies points out that the Kachins, A-Changs, Zis and La-shis call the Shans by the name of Sam, the Ma-ru name for them is Sen, the Palaung name is Tsem, the Wa name Shem, and the Talaings call them Sem.³⁵ All these names appear to be mere phonetic variations of the original word 'Shan' in the different tribal tongues.

33 Yun-nan, pp. 380-81.

34 Keane : ibid., p. 191.

35 Yun-nan : The Link between India and the Yangtze, Cambridge, 1909 , pp. 377-87.

SIAM :

'Siam' is another name of which the origin is a subject of controversy. It is said that Siam is the same word as Shan, a form coming to us through the Portuguese Siao.³⁶ J. Leyden points out that "by the Burmas, they (the Siamese) are denominated Syan, from whence the Portuguese seem to have borrowed their Siam or Sisom, from whom the other nations of Europe have adopted the term."³⁷ Others believe that it has been derived from Malay Sayan meaning 'brown'. Cushing says that "it may not be generally known that the form Siam is nothing but a corruption of the French method of writing Shan as 'Sciam'". He further says that "in adopting the French method of spelling the word, we mispronounce the name because we make two syllables of the word. This mispronunciation, however, has become generally accepted, and to call the Shans of Bangkok anything but Siamese would be needlessly misleading as well as pedantic. Moreover, the difference in the name is now useful, as it marks off the Southern branch of the Tai or Htai race."³⁸ Dr. Grierson, who substantially agrees with Cushing, also points out that the word 'Siam' appears to be an Anglicised form of the Portuguese or Italian 'Sciam' which is an attempt to write 'Sham', a variant of 'Shan'.³⁹ Thus the

³⁶ Keane : ibid., p. 191.

³⁷ Asiatic Researches : vol X, London, 1811 : vide, "On the Languages and Literature of the Indo-Chinese Nations" by J. Leyden, M.D. - X Thai.

³⁸ Eale's Report on the Census of Burma, 1892, p.200.

³⁹ Linguistic survey of India, vol, II, Tai, Group : General Introduction.

words Sam, Siam and also Cham (not the Austronesian Cham of modern Annam) undoubtedly stand for the original name Shan. That the Tai, the Shans, the Siamese and the Ahoms (from A-sham) belong to the same racial group is proved by the fact that the Tai from the north are called Shan-gyi or Great Shans by the Burmese, 'Sam' in Assam by the Assamese and Tai-gut or the left - behind Tai by the Siamese, the latter meaning those Tai who did not come with the Siamese to Ayuthia, the Siamese themselves being called Yodia Shan by the Burmese.⁴⁰

But the above explanations are concerned mainly with the form of the word 'Siam' and not with its origin. Regarding the latter point some scholars suggest that the name 'Siam' is derived from the sanskrit word Syama meaning 'black'. When the Indians first colonised this country the fair - coloured Hindus called the native population "Black" (Skt. Syama, Pali, Samo). This black population, according to these writers, referred to the Thai, who, on their part, called the country Muang Thai, the country of the Thai people.⁴¹ But this view is obviously wrong, because the Thai people are as fair as the Hindus or rather fairer on the average. If the early Hindu colonists would have at all applied the term 'Syama' to designate a black race they could have done so more appropriately to refer to the black - skinned

⁴⁰ Ney Elias : Introductory Sketch of the History of the Shans, 1876, p.2 ; Colquhoun : ibid, p. 207. Yodia, pronounced 'Euria' by the Burmese, is simply Ayothia or Ayodhya, the old capital of Siam and Yodia Shans means the Shans of the kingdom of Ayodhya.

⁴¹ G. Schlegel : Siamese studies, 1902, pp.6-7 ; P.N. Bose : The Indian colony of Siam, 1927, p. 2.

inhabitants of Funan (Southern Cambodia), where they had landed much earlier than in Siam and spread their culture. The Funanese were described as ugly, black, frizzy-haired and naked by Kang Tai, a Chinese envoy, who visited that country between A.D. 245 and A.D. 250. Kang Tai was also the first person to mention in his accounts the name of Hun-tien, who founded the kingdom of Funan in the first century A.D. It is also said that Hun-tien was but a Chinese transliteration of Kaundinya, a political adventurer from India. The name 'Kaundinya' suggests that he was the descendant of the original Kaundinya, who was a Brahman, but was first to be converted by Buddha.⁴² But in this case the conqueror of Funan (Komboja-desa) appears to be a Hindu Ksatriya prince of the Kaundinya gotra and the kings of that dynasty adopted this family name. Maspero suggests that the first invasion by Kaundinya came from Java and formed part of a great movement, possibly with its central seat in Java, that led to the foundation of other Hindu States in Champa and Borneo in that early period of the Christian era. At that time the modern Siam was included in the dominions of the Empire of Funan, which extended from Annam to the Bay of Bengal. It is extremely doubtful that there was any Tai population worth the name in the Menam

⁴² Edward J. Thomas : The History of Buddhist Thought, 1953, pp.136, 183. Hun-tien's name is mentioned in the annals of the Chi dynasty (479-501). But in the annals of the Tsin dynasty the stranger's name is given as Hun-Hui, who worshipped the Devas and had a dream, in which one of them gave him a bow and ordered him to sail for Funan. He then set out for this new land and conquered it and married the queen, who ruled there. - vide Pelliot's Funan, also Eliot : op.cit., vol.III, pp.104-5.

valley in that early period. It is also not known that the Tai of Siam ever professed Hinduism as a national religion.

In the tenth century A.D. the central part of Thailand (Siam) was called by the Mon-speaking people of Dvaravati as "Sama-des" or the Land of the Sams. Briggs refers to a Pali document, Jinakalamalini written in 1516 which, in speaking of events in 1339, mentions 'Sukhodayapura in Syamadesa' (i.e., country of the Syam, or of the 'dark brown people')⁴³ Phya Anuman Rajadhan, an eminent Thai scholar of Bangkok, points out that the word 'Sam' was Pali-ized into 'Sama' and then Sanscritized into 'Syama' and Europeanized into 'Siam'. This appears to be the most probable development of the word 'Sam' or 'Shan' into 'Siam'. Some scholars trace the origin of the word Siam to 'Sien' of the Chinese, who applied that name to the Thai kingdom of Sukhot'ai (Skt. Sukhodaya).⁴⁴ Francis Buchanan, from his local investigations learns that the Thai people of Siam were called 'Syianlo' or 'Kyaenlo' by the Chinese of Yun-nan.⁴⁵ Thus these Syianlo or Sienlo were the people of 'Sien' country or Sukhot'ai. The Khmers used the name 'Syam' to refer to the 'Savages' from the middle Menam. That these savages were no other than the Tai, who were destined to be the powerful rivals of the Khmers, is further confirmed by the fact that in the bas-reliefs of

43 JAOS. vol. 69, 1949, pp. 68-9 ; also BEHE-0 1925,95.

44 Hall : op.cit. p.150; P.N.Bose : op.cit. Foreword by P.C.Bagchi, pp. V-VII.

45 "A Comparative Vocabulary of Some of the Languages Spoken in the Burma Empire" in Asiatic Researches, vol. V, 4th Ed., 1807, pp. 227-28.

the South-west gallery of the Angkor Wat⁴⁶ are depicted soldiers dressed like the Cambodians and described in the inscriptions as troops of Lvo,⁴⁷ while those depicted on the South gallery and dressed and armed in a different manner are mentioned as the soldiers of Syam-Kuk (Sukhot'ai), the latter being Thai mercenaries⁴⁸ exhibited as representing martial characteristics different from those of the Cambodians. Peaceful penetration of the Tai into the Menam valley began from a much earlier date and by about the ninth century A.D. many Tai cities (Muangs) were found to have developed among the Mons and the Khmers. From the latter part of the ninth century the Tai in the Upper Menam and the middle Mekong region assumed an aggressive role putting increasing pressure on the Khmer dominions and annexing or liberating from the Khmer Yoke parts of those dominions from time to time in the following centuries.

The territories which the Tai mostly inhabited in the Menam valley were known as Siem, Syam or Syama.⁴⁹ According to Gerini the Mon word for Siamese is Sem ; the Khmer word is Siem ; the Chinese word is Sien or Hsien ; the Cham, Syam ;

46 Angkor is a corruption of Nokor (= Nagar). Angkor Thom = Mahanagara. - Eliot, op.cit., III, p. 110.

47 The country of Lvo is also mentioned in an inscription of the end of the tenth century A.D. discovered at Lopburi. Lvo of the Angkor-Vat inscription, Lo hou of the Chinese annals, and Lavo of the ancient Siamese is the same as the Lopbuti (Skt. Navapura) flourishing in the lower valley of the Menam. - P.C. Bagchi in P.W. Bose's book, p. V.

48 Hall : op.cit., p. 144.

49 Eliot : op.cit., III, p. 79.

and the Malay, Siam.⁵⁰ Briggs thinks that the first Europeans, the Portuguese, who came in contact with the Siamese in 1511, called them Siao (= Sian in English), probably from Malay. This explanation is less convincing than that given by Cushing. The name 'Syam' is found first in an inscription of Champa (in Sanskrit) of A.D. 1050. The Cham inscription speaks of taking Syam prisoners along with Khmers and Chinese. About a century later (1150) they appear on the bas-reliefs of Angkor Wat as mercenaries in the Khmer army where the accompanying sanskrit inscriptions call them Syam and Syam-kuk. Syam here refers to the Tai of the upper or rather middle Menam. According to Gerini, the word appears in Ptolemy's Sāma-rade which is interpreted as Sāmarāttha.⁵¹ Here 'Syam' is commonly identified with Sanskrit 'Syama' meaning black or dark, but actually Syama appears to be a Sanskritized distortion of the non-Sanskrit original. Further Samarade is in the lower Menam valley where the presence of the Tai in Ptolemy's time is most improbable. The Chinese historians refer to frequent embassies appearing at the Chinese court from the States of Sien (Hsien) and Lo-hou between 1282 and 1323⁵² and these two States were undoubtedly the Syam and Ivo of the Khmers as mentioned in the inscribed labels of Angkor Wat.

⁵⁰ JAOS. vol. 69. 1949, p. 69.

⁵¹ Gerini : Researches on Ptolemy's Geography of Eastern Asia, 1909, p. 170.

⁵² Paul Pelliot : Deux itinéraires etc. BEFEO 1904, 230-31.

Syam and Ivo are identified with Sukhot'ai and Lopburi. About the same time, the name Sien-lo (Hsien-lo) was also applied by the Chinese to these people.⁵³ The kingdom of Sukhot'ai was then well known in Eastern Asia under the name Syam or Sien and its founders were called Syam-kuk or Sien-lo. Aymonier read the name in the Angkor Wat inscriptions as Syam-kut and Pelliot followed his reading, but Coedes, who made a thorough study of these inscriptions, says the reading is clearly Syam-kuk.⁵⁴ At this time the territories south of Ivo were still held by the Cambodians. In the above context Sien, Siem and Syam appear to be the variants of Shan or Sham, and Siam is the Europeanized form of it. Chinese Sien was simply the land

53 Pelliot : *Memoires sur les coutumes de Cambodge*, par Tchou Ta-Kouan, BEFF-O, 1902. 112 as referred to by Briggs in JAOS, vol. 69, 1949, p. 62.

54 Bulletin de la commission archeologique de l'Indochine 1911, 203, note 3 ; JAOS, vol. 69, 1959, p. 62.

of the Shan people.⁵⁵ The terms Syam or Sama preceded the name Thai in this area.

These Tai people were earlier living in the hills in Southern Yun-nan before getting down to the fertile plains of the Mekong and the Menam rivers.⁵⁶ Most of these people had to seek shelter in the hills leaving their homes in the rich plains of Sze-chuan, Yun-nan and Kwei-chow as early as the third century A.D. when General Chu-ko-Liang of

55 Terrien de Lacouperie, writing much earlier, connects the Tai-Shan race with the ancient Shang (Shang, Traders), who, after overthrowing the Hsia dynasty about the sixteenth century B.C., established their sway over northern China. The very name 'Shang' is supposed to be the antecedent of the cognate appellatives Shan and Siam. He points out that many names, such as Tchang, Siang, Shen, Sien and similar others are met with representing one original name in the nomenclature of native clans and tribes of the same stock in its earlier seats in Central China over which there was no Sanskrit influence. Hence he has dismissed the proposed etymology for Siam from Sanskrit - "Syama", black, as inadequate as the original racial name is certainly older than this supposed origin would permit. - op.cit., p. 1. Whatever may be the real origin of the words Shan and Siam, the appearance of names, such as Shen and Sien, in Central China is remarkable for the presence of same names far South in Indo-China at a much later period when the Tai had already migrated to that region. As in Central China these names in the Irrawaddy and the Menam Valleys undoubtedly refer to Tai tribes and their principalities. Moreover they point not only to the earlier abode of the race but also indicate the general direction of its movement to the South. If Terrien de Lacouperie's statement can be relied upon, then the original Shen or Sien might well have become Shan in the south and become San and Siam as these people spread further to the south and west in the Indo-Chinese peninsula. In that case Shen or Sien must have been an appellation given by the Chinese to the original Tai race as a term of contempt signifying a conquered people, or it was a Chinese place name from which the Tai, who had their abode in it, acquired this appellation. But the Chinese tonal differences of words meaning different things can not always be expressed in foreign words. Hence mere similarity of spelling of words may not always mean the same thing. Neither is there any historical evidence in support of the above identification.

56 L. Hoontrakul : op.cit., p. 99.

the Han invaded Yun-nan, apparently to put down a rebellion. The last greatest exodus of these people to the south was when in the middle of the thirteenth century the Mongols under Kublai Khan swept down to South China. It seems therefore that the appellations Shan (or Sham), Sam, Sien, Siem, Syam or Siam were used from about the ninth or tenth century A.D. by the different peoples in referring to the Tai immigrants from the southern highlands of Yun-nan. But the name Siam became prominent in history only in the thirteenth century which is also the Sukhodaya period.⁵⁷

ASSAM : AHOM :

The Shans from Burma were called Sam in Assam and at a later stage Sam became Sanskritized into Syam among the Assamese Hindus. The name of the Shans as Sam was perhaps first heard by the inhabitants of Eastern Assam from the Kachins (Singphos on the Assam side) on the eastern border of Assam. In Assam 'Sam' or 'Syam' does not mean 'black', only the tribe is known by that name to the local people. The appellation Ahom is applied to the pre-British Tai rulers of Assam. After the British occupation of Assam the Ahoms found themselves gradually reduced to the status of a district community only among the population of the Brahmaputra valley,

⁵⁷ In the English language the name Siamese refers to the people of Siam and Siam refers to the country of these people. L. Hoontrakul points out that King Khun Sri Indratit of Sawankalok moved southward and built a capital called Sukhat'ai and established a kingdom called Siam. He also says that in Chinese Siam means High Noon. - *op.cit.*, pp. 101, 104. Does Siam mean here simply the most powerful kingdom or a great kingdom? It is difficult to explain the word Siam in this sense in reference to the Siamese people.

their habitat being virtually confined to the districts of Sibsagar and Lakhimpur in Eastern (or Upper) Assam. The word 'Ahom' appears to be a phonetic variation of 'Asam' or 'Asama', which is itself a Sanskritized distortion of Ā-Sām, a form of Bodo origin. Ā in Bodo means earth, land or country and when the Tai or Sāms conquered the upper part of the Brahmaputra valley in Assam and established their kingdom in it the Bodo people called that area Ā-Sām, the country or kingdom of the Sāms. In the old Assamese Buranjis the writers referred to the Ahoms or their kingdom as Asam, Acam, Asyam or Acam. These words were so written either from actual Ā-Sām, the land of the sams or its Sanskritized variant Asam (peerless, unequalled) which the Pandits used in their writings during the great days of the Ahoms. The words Asam, Acam and Asam (or Asom) were further corrupted in the early British period into Aham and Aham and lastly into Ahom, the present form of the earlier Sam or Asam to refer to the race instead of the country. Whatever may be the course of word development according to the rules of Philology, it is difficult to think otherwise than that 'Asam' developed from 'Sam' in the dialects of the peoples of the Brahmaputra valley region and, at a later period, Asam was put in writings in the Sanskritized form Asam, from which the name Ahom has evolved. Assam (Anglicized) or Asam is the land of the Sāms (the Tai-Ahoms), who first established their kingdom in the Brahmaputra valley in the thirteenth century. The name Asam, and not Sanskritized Assamese 'Asam' (Asama), is therefore correct in the original

sense. 'Asām' refers to a definite political change in the history of Assam, whereas 'Asam' is a convenient transformation under Sanskrit influence and hence admitting of all manner of explanations, such as unequal, uneven etc. In recent times the Assamese have, however, preferred the Sanskritized form Asam to A-sam or Assam and have used it as the standard form of the name of their State. In this connection it may be mentioned that the term "Asamiya" (Assamese) means the Aryan Assamese language of Assam and, in the present day practice, the term is also used more and more to mean only the section of the population speaking this language. But in history by the term Assamese (Āshām or Asam) only the Ahoms (the Tai of Assam) were referred to both by the Mughal writers⁵⁸ and Hindu Vaishnava preachers.⁵⁹ The Mughal writer's Āshām and the Vaishnava writer's Asam were without doubt merely characteristic variants of original Ā-sām.

But the Ahoms have never referred to themselves as Shan or Sam or by any of its Assamese variants including Ahom in their own literature or buranjis, written in Tai. This is true of their writings down to the end of their rule in Assam. They always called themselves Tai and their scholars wrote as such throughout the historical period. The downfall of the Ahom

⁵⁸ Shihabu'd-Din Talish : Fa-thiya-i-'Ibriya (Ta'rikh-i-Asham) of which a text was published in Calcutta (24th May, 1849) by "Aftab-i-'Alamtāb" Press. See Blochmann's translation (an abstract only), JASB.; 1872 ; Sir Jadunath Sarkar : JASB. in 1906, 1907 and Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society, vol. I, p. 179; also Gait : History of Assam (Calcutta, 1926), particularly p. 140 (foot-note for the meaning of 'Assamese').

⁵⁹ Assamese Nam Ghosa (501).

rule was followed by a dark period in the glorious traditions of Assam. With the loss of independence and under the changed conditions, political and cultural, of the last hundred years or so the Ahoms have fast deteriorated in mental and physical vigour and forgotten their own language, history and historical link with their race in the great sub-continent of South-east Asia. As a result they now generally call themselves not Tai but by the local name Ahom which is little known to the Tai of the rest of Asia. Only in very recent times historical researches seem to have brought a certain degree of consciousness to the Ahoms about their past and racial identity.

Two other explanations of the terms Ahom and Assam deserve consideration. Dr. B.K. Kakati has attempted to connect the term Asam as applied to the Shans with Tai cham, "to be defeated", with the Aryan Assamese privative prefix a -, the whole formation Asam meaning "undefeated" 'victorious', thus being a hybrid equivalent of the word Thai, (Tai) meaning free.⁶⁰ This explanation appears to be far-fetched. The Ahoms never called themselves Asam or Acham. If the Aryanized people of Assam ever called them by that name in the above sense it would presuppose a knowledge of the Tai language on their part in order that a comparatively obscure foreign word, such as 'cham', might be so used to coin a new word. But it is difficult to believe that the Assamese had already any such knowledge. Moreover the word cham (Sham or Hsan as the Shans pronounce it) is a verb

60 The Mother Goddess Kamakhya, p. 2.

only and is not used either as an adjective or a noun. Hence Asam or Aoham as a noun from cham is unlikely. If Asam be a hybrid equivalent of the word Thai meaning free, 'Sam', or 'Siamese' would mean 'unfree' which is contrary to facts of history.

Dr. S.K. Chatterji suggests that the name Ahom comes from Rhwam, a name by which the Burmese referred to the Shan people when they first met the latter. The Burmese wrote the word Rhwam in the Mon script which they had adopted in the eleventh century A.D. "In course of centuries, owing to certain characteristic developments of the Burmese phonology, the word has now come to be pronounced in Modern Burmese as Shan, although the old orthography as Rhwam still persists (Rhwa / Yhwam / Hyan / Cyam / Shan : ...). Now, the name Ahom would appear to be connected as a tribal name with this Rhwam : "Dr. Chatterji seems to believe that either from early dropping of the initial R - in Ahom mouths, or its modification to A gave the form Ahom. He further says that "Ahom as a foreign tribal name was not properly understood by Old Assamese speaking Hindu and other Bodos when the Ahom conquerors came into East Assam, and it would appear that the name Ahom was sought to be 'corrected', into what was thought to be its original Sanskrit form, as A-sama and this gave the word Asam-Assam as the name of the country which the Ahoms conquered and established themselves in.⁶¹ As pointed out

⁶¹ The Place of Assam in the History and Civilisation of India - Banikanta Kakati Memorial Lectures, Gauhati, 1954, pp. 42-3.

already the modern Ahoms never wrote nor called themselves Ahom as a corruption of Rhwam. The word is nowhere to be found in their Tai-Ahom literature. Hence it is difficult to imagine that the Assamese of those days could get this tribal name from the Ahoms to^{be} corrected into its supposed Sanskrit form. Further it is Asam, Asam, Asam or Acam that is generally found in the earlier Assamese literature, the form Ahom being the latest development and that too in the British period. The Bodos predominated in Eastern Assam at the time the Tai-Ahoms entered that land. The Kachins and the Bodos called the Tai-Ahoms Sam. It is most certain that Assam, the name of the country, is from A-Sam, the country of the Sams, which was later Sanskritized into A-sama from which the forms Asam and Ahom gradually arose.

THE PAI :

The Tai of South China are called Pai-yi (barbarians).⁶² They are chiefly concentrated in the South-western bulge of Yun-nan across the frontier of Burma where they are also called Thai Nu'a. But the Pai-yi of southeastern Yun-nan seem to be the ancestors of the Laotians, as well as of the Black Tai and White Tai of Tonkin.⁶³ In early periods they were referred to by the peoples of Burma as Taroks or Shan-Taroks and in the later period as Shans. These names were probably applied by the Pyu and the

62 Erik Seidenfaden's Notes on Ethnic Groups of Northern Southeast Asia in JSS., Vol. XL, Pt. I, 1952, p. 77.
 63 JAOS., vol. 69, 1949, p. 66.

Mons of Burma, whose dominions once extended far to the north and were subject to inroads from China from time to time. The Tai people of South China have numerous sub-groups whom the Chinese called by various names, such as P'o, Pa or Pai-i, Shui, Han or Hua Pai-i, Pai-jen, T'u-jen, P'u-man, Pai, Hei, or Hua T'u-lao, Nung or Lung-jen, Sha-jen, Hei or Pai Sha-jen, Min-Chia, or Min-Ch'iang, Shui-Chia and Chung-Chia.⁶⁴ Among all these the Pai⁶⁵ is the most numerous element and the Chinese use it as synonymous with Tai.

Ju-K'ang T'ien, writing on one of the Tai tribes called Mangshi in the South-west part of Yun-nan, said that the Chinese of the neighbouring districts say that these people are called Pai-i because they practise cults known as Pai which they consider to be essential features of their social life. "Pai"⁶⁶ is the comprehensive name given to a series of cultural activities having religious significance expressing the community's belief in the Buddha.⁶⁷ It may be noted that many features of these cults are

⁶⁴ GUBBS., "Ethnology", p. 619.

⁶⁵ Pai is variously spelt as Pa-i, Pai-i, Pai-yi, Pa-yi, Pa-y, Pai'y, Peyih, Pa-yeh etc.

⁶⁶ In the Shan Buddhist language 'pai', pronounced as 'pwei', means a religious festival.

⁶⁷ American Anthropologist, vol. 51, Nov.i, 1949, pp. 46-59.

strikingly similar to those of the Assamese Bihu festivals.⁶⁸ The appellation Pai from Pai cults is undoubtedly a vulgar way of interpreting the meaning of the word. Pai means simply a festival and is not restricted to the cults mentioned above. What is important here is the essential features of the festivals which are more or less common to the festivals elsewhere among the Tai.

Professor T. de Lacouperie, relying on the Chinese sources, points out that the Pa or Pa-Y are a branch of the Tai and are "scattered from the south of Setchuen, throughout Yun-nan and south borders. We hear of them in 1971 B.C. when the Chinese ruler, K'i of Hia, is reputed to have sent to them his minister,

⁶⁸ There are six Pai cults of which the Great Pai is the most important, the other cults being Public Pai, Chin-Hueng-Tan-Pai, Kan-To-Pai, Ting-Tang-Pai and Lan-se-Pai. The Great Pai, in its essentials, consists of the exhibition of certain articles which the house-holder presents as offerings to the village Buddhist temple. The ceremony extends over at least three days accompanied with various other activities including dancing, singing, feasting and procession. Other Pai festivals provide occasions for demonstrating the whole procedure of clothing manufacture, arts and crafts and their products and also the arrangement of daily work according to seasonal changes. The Assamese Bihus too, apart from their religious significance, if any, must have had as their cardinal feature demonstration of the basic arts and culture and the mode of social life of the community. The Assamese national festival called Bohag Bihu, which is celebrated annually in April on the grandest scale with dances, songs, instrumental music and congregational merriment and with the exhibition of the best samples of clothes woven by the women in every family, represents the tastes and the artistic achievements of the Assamese people. Likewise the harvest festival of Magh Bihu, which is characterised by social entertainments with the choicest dinners and exhibition of wrestling power of the youth and of animal fighting, represents the richness and variety of the harvests of the season. Stripped of their religious coating, whether Buddhist or Hindu, this group of social festivals, wherever they are found, in Yun-nan, Burma or Assam, appears to be peculiar to the Tai and the associated peoples.

Mang-t'u. They were subdued by the State of Ts'in in 338 B.C., and since that time have slowly advanced southwards. The oldest settlements were in Western Szechuen".⁶⁹ The early account given here refers to the mythical period and, without denying some K'i of Hia (Haia) of the time, we can not be definitely sure that there ever was a Chinese ruling House called Hia and hence Mang-t'u's mission. Apparently at that time the Pa-y were enjoying free and independent life with a system of government of their own. But whether the Tai were actually known to the early kings of China by the name of Pa-y is doubtful. It is equally doubtful if there were 'Chinese rulers' at that time. As regards the Pai people's movement further to the south from their earlier home in Western Sze-chuan J. Deniker says that their migrations may be followed from the first century B.C., when "the Pa-y tribes came from Szechuen into Western Yun-nan to found there the kingdom of Luh-Tchao. Another kingdom, that of Muang-ling,"⁷⁰ was founded more to the south-west in Upper Burma". The cause of these migrations was the pressure of the Chinese from the north.

Henri d'Orleans points out that Pa-i is only another name for Lao. He constantly met Pa-i groups all along the route from Tongking to Assam. He further says that the bulk of the lowland population of Assam (meaning the Ahoms), from whom Assam takes its name, belongs originally to the same family.⁷¹ Rev. William Clifton

⁶⁹ *Op. cit.*, pp. 11-111.

⁷⁰ probably Mong Long.

⁷¹ Keane : *op. cit.*, p. 192.

Dodd writes that both Pa and Lung belong to the Lao race and that he found both these tribes in Southern Yun-nan during his journey of 1910. They still bear the ancient tribal names, Pa and Lung. The modern Chinese call them Pa-i, the Pa barbarians and Lung-ies, the Lung people. The Lung (or Hung) are mostly found now in Kwang-tung and Kwang-si. Rev. Dodd also says that their own speech is Lao or Tai as he found by talking with them and hearing them talk. The modern Pa call themselves Tai, but are invariably mentioned as Pa-i by the Chinese writers.⁷²

THE HUNG :

Chinese Annals refer to another group of people, called Ta Hung or Dai Hung, that is the Great Hung, Belonging to the same race, mentioned in the geographical survey instituted under the Emperor Ta Yu or Dai Yu (the Great Yu), said to be the founder of the Hsia (or Hsia) dynasty.⁷³ Fraa Sarassas points out that it was the Chinese who called this race (Tai) Dai Hung instead of Ai-Lao.⁷⁴ The Hung established themselves in China before the advent of the Chinese, but as to the origin and meaning of the word "Hung", nothing definite is known except that they are an integral section of the Tai. "The Hung", says Dr. Dodd, "belong to the Ai-Lao race. The Ai-Lao belong to the aborigines ; the aborigines preceded the Chinese in the migration from the West ;

⁷² Dodd: The Tai Race, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, 1923, chap. I.

⁷³ T. de Lacouperie : op.cit., pp. 1-11.

⁷⁴ Ai-Lao means senior or elder people. Sarassas : My Country Thailand : Its History, Geography and Civilisation, p. 4.

the Chinese themselves came earlier than 2200 B.C., probably much earlier".⁷⁵ If this statement can be relied upon then the pre-Ch'in early empires of the great Lao people can be said to have extended over the major part of the present China and the ruling aristocracy of the race, known as the Tai, spread to the different territorial divisions of the Lao dominions for the management of their administration. In later centuries the Ch'in Imperialists, in their vast drive for expansion, simply discovered the descendants of the early Tai, both as politically dominant communities in some areas and as scattered elements in others in the Central Belt of China and southwards and called them by various nicknames.

Ta Yu's ^{reign} ~~is~~ said to have commenced about 2208 B.C. and his name is mentioned in what is probably the earliest literary work, the Shih Ching (Classic of Poetry).⁷⁶ The great Mung people, who were contemporary of Ta Yu, must have had a glorious career in the early period of China, but we know little about it except by way of casual references to them made by Chinese historians until their reappearance as builders of the Nan-Chao empire in the seventh century A.D. The Ta Mung were in the region of the setting sun according to the Erh-Ya, the oldest known Chinese dictionary, compiled in the fifth century B.C., and their habitat was in the western part of the Sze-chuan province. The chief characteristic of the Mung people, as stated by the Chinese compilers, was sincerity. The Mung formed the

⁷⁵ Dodds : op.cit., chap.I.

⁷⁶ Latourette : The Chinese : Their History and Culture, New York, 1946, p. 39.

leading family of the Nan-Chao agglomeration of tribes which united under it to set up that powerful Ai-Lao kingdom in Yun-nan which was destined later to flourish as the Nan-Chao empire. The Mung also played a leading part in several other agglomerations in subsequent periods.⁷⁷ They migrated eastwards and are to-day known to the Annamese as Muongs, who spread throughout the hilly regions in Tonking.⁷⁸

THE LU : THE HKUN : THE YUNS : THE TCHAO :

It has been noted that Luh or Lu and Muang or Mung are but different clan names of the same Tai-Shan race. The Lu of the left bank of the Mekong form the bulk of the population in the State of Hsip Hsawng Mong (Keng Hung : lat. 22°, long. 100°50') and the neighbouring parts of southern Yun-nan.⁷⁹ Keng Hung is the Cheli of the Chinese and the Hsip Hsawng Panna (XII Panna) of the local Tai. Keng Tung has another group of Tai people called Hkun. The Yuns are concentrated in Lan-na. These three sections of the Tai race are supposed to have descended from the Ngai-Lao above them on the Mekong, with whose Kengs theirs were continuous. Briggs says that they mixed with the Karens and with still earlier Lawas whose dwellings in the hills surrounded them. The Yuns conquered the Mons of Haripunjai and absorbed them. According to Pierre Lefevre-Pontalis the Lu spread to the south establishing their

⁷⁷ T. de Lacouperie : op.cit., p. li ; Dodds, op.cit., chap. I.

⁷⁸ Dodds : ibid ; Hallett : op.cit., p. 329.

⁷⁹ Davies : Yun-nan, p. 381.

kingdom of Lao Chong below the Hsi-p-Hsawng-Panna in A.D. 701 with its capital of Chieng Rao which was in the beginning of the tenth century A.D. moved near Chieng Sen.⁸⁰ The Tchao, as mentioned in connection with Luh-Tchao, were simply the easternmost branch of the same Tai race that occupied Central China at that time. They lived in what is now An-hui in the vicinity of the Lao mountains. The meaning of the name Tchao is, according to Professor T. de Lacouperie, a nesting people, so called from their habit of building their houses on piles. He further says that it was among them, possibly as a cognate tribe, that the founder of the Shang dynasty exiled Kieh, the last ruler of the overthrown Hia dynasty in 1558 B.C.⁸¹ The Tchao spread southwards in the subsequent periods into Kiang-si and became an important constituent of the population of the Tsu Kingdom. In the tenth century A.D. they moved under pressure from the north into the region of Hunan, western Kwang-si and Kweichow and many even left China for the neighbouring countries. They are still largely represented by the Tu-jen, Tchong-kia and other tribes now found in Kwang-si and Kwei-chow. Some of these people must have migrated even from much earlier times to Yun-nan and Burma and set up their own States.

THE LAOS :

A very important section of the Tai called Lao deserve special study. To-day the inhabitants of North Siam are described

⁸⁰ JAOS, vol. 69, 1949, p. 70.

⁸¹ "the accomplished T'ang banished Kieh to Southern Tsau" - The Shu King, trans. by Walter Corn Old, 1904, p. 77. T'ang banished Hia's Ruler (Kieh-Kwei) to Nan-tsau, the modern Ngan-hwi on the Yang-tse-Kiang. - See Translator's Note, op.cit., p. 83.

as Lao.⁸² Actually the Laos are scattered over southern China, northern French Indo-China and the north and north-eastern parts of Siam itself.⁸³ It is the southern Thai who call the Thai people of northern and eastern Siam Lao. Cushing mentions the Lao as one of the several divisions of the Tai family.⁸⁴ He further says that the Siamese form the southern half and the Laos the northern half of the kingdom of Siam. According to H.R.H. Prince Damrong "Lao" is a nickname used as a contraction of the word Lawa or Lwa.⁸⁵ Briggs says that the use of Lao is now specifically applied to a specific Tai people, called Laotians by the French. He further says that recently an attempt has been made to extend the appellation Lao to the Lawas, who are quite a different people.⁸⁶ The Lawas are one of the darker races, but the pure Laos (Tai) are fair.⁸⁷ Here it is important to note Hallett's investigation who points out that the Lawa, or Lava, were the aboriginal inhabitants to the south of Yun-nan and were driven southward and into the hills by the Yun or Karens, who, on their part, had to move southward under Shan pressure.⁸⁸ This appears to be true as the Ngai-Laos and the Laos are undoubtedly Tai, whereas the Lawas are not. There is

82 Wood : History of Siam, 1933, p. 31.

83 W.D. Reeve : Public Administration in Siam, (Royal Institute of International Affairs, London & New York), 1951, p.7.

84 Cushing : op.cit., Introduction, p.1.

85 Credner : Cultural and Geographical Observations made in Tali (Yunnan) Region with Special regard to the Nan-Chao Problem, Bangkok, 1934, Translator's Comments, p. 19.

86 JAOS, vol. 69, 1949, p.63 ; Erick Seidenfaden : Anthropological and ethnological research work in Siam, JSS, 28, 1, 15-8 (1935) ; W.A. Graham : Siam, 131-3 (2 vols : London, 1824).

87 JAOS, vol. 69, 1949, p.69.

88 Historical Sketch of the Shans, in Amongst the Shans, pp. 338-39.

another Tai group called Lau who are found chiefly beyond the Cambodian river and are tributary to Siam. Yule locates them in Wintchian and Lantchian.

During the sixth century A.D. the Laos pushed eastward through North Siam to the south-west of Tongking and, during the three centuries that followed, established their kingdoms as far as Viengchang or Chandrapuri on the banks of the Mekong. It was also the time when the Mun-Shans occupying the country to the south of Kieng-Hung, founded the towns of Labong, Lagon, Phitsalok (Pitsanulok or Vishnulok), Kampang (Kamp'engp'et i. e. Kamben Bejr or Vajra) and Sangkalok (Svargalok) in the basins of the Me-ping, Me-wang and Me-nam. Now the Laotians are an important section of the Tai that occupy the south-eastern region of the Indo-Chinese peninsula.

In regard to the trend of migration of the Tai in Indo-China Cushing observes : "It is probable that the earliest regions occupied by the Tai were in the upper part of Burma. The Siamese, who are the latest division to emigrate and settle in their present home, call themselves Htai Noi or Little Tai and name the Laos Htai Niai or Great Htai. The Laos, in turn, use the term Great Tai to designate the Shan communities farther to the north. The appellation Tai Long, which is the equivalent of the Siamese Htai Niai, really belongs to the Shans of Northern Burma, and is accepted by them. This would seem to indicate that that region is recognised as the one occupied by that portion of the race which made the earliest migration."⁸⁹

⁸⁹ Op.cit., Introduction, p. 2. See also his "Note on the Shans (Tai) in Burma" in the Report on the Census of Burma by H.L. Eales, 1892, pp. 200-201.

Rev. Dodds, who worked among the Laos and made a special study of that people, is of the opinion that the Tai-speaking race call themselves Lao from the earliest times. For the word 'Lao' in their language originally meant 'man' or 'person'. Dodds discovered its use in this archaic sense during his journey amongst the illiterate Tai in China, who use many words in a sense lost or discredited among their literate brethren. He also refers to Colonel Gerini, a great authority on the Siamese language and race, who wrote in the Asiatic Quarterly that "their racial name was Lao or Ai-Lao, for which they soon substituted the title - not name - of Tai". Enough authentic material is not available for the confirmation of this view. The norther Tai, including the Aboms of Assam, call themselves Tai and not Lao in their Chronicles. Gerini also points out that the term 'Ai' in the compound Ai-Lao is the Tai word for 'male' whence Ai-Lao means "male Lao" as well as "The Lao" (men or people).

The ancient home of the Laos was in the eastern part of Central China to the north of the Yang-tse-Kiang occupying most of the region extending from Sze-chuan to An-hui. E. Seidenfaden is of the opinion that the southern Thai wrongly give the name Lao to the northern and north-eastern Thai people of Siam, for the word Lao or Ai-Lao probably denoted not the race but the region from which these Thai people came.⁹⁰ This view deserves attention and, if supported by ancient geography of the region,

⁹⁰ Credner's Monograph Cultural and Geographical Observations made in the Tali (Yunnan) Region with Special Regard to the Nan-Chao Problem, Bangkok, 1935 : Translator's Comments, p. 19.

will solve a puzzling question arising from the multiplicity of names of the race. Mr. E. H. Parker, quoting chiefly the Annals of the Chinese T'ang dynasty, points out that "the Annamese still call the Laos of Upper Siam by the name of Ai-Lao."⁹¹ He further says that Ai-Laos were next called Nan-Chao when they reappeared upon the Chinese political stage.⁹² That Nan-Chao was Tai no body disputes. "Chao", according to the Chinese, is a barbarian word for "Prince". It means "Prince" in Siamese, Shan, Lao and Ahom. The geographical distribution of the Lao people in the region from North Siam to Yun-nan also connects the so-called Lao of Siam with the Ai-Lao of Yun-nan as one people. It seems a branch of the Tai that lived in the area of the Lao Shan (i.e. Lao Mountain) at the intersection of Honan, Hupeh and Ngankuy (An-hui) provinces, acquired the name of Lao or Ai-Lao. These Lao people gradually extended their habitat to the Kiu-lung range forming the boundaries of Shen-si and Sze-Chuan provinces.⁹³ Perhaps it was in this area that the Chinese imperialists, during their period of political expansion, first discovered this race towards the last quarter of the third century B.C. and recorded their relations with these people from which T. de Lacouperie came to the conclusion that "the cradle of the Shan (Tai) race was in the Kiu-lung mountains", as noted above. The Laos, in their turn, had many sub-groups, such as Shen-Lao, Ko-Lao, Po-Lao, etc. These Ai-Laos

91 Scott : *Burma and Beyond*, London, 1932, p. 208.

92 GUBSS. I.I. p. 260.

93 T. de Lacouperie : *op.cit.*, p. lli.

(Ngai-Laos) also emerged as a ruling race in the first century of the Christian era in Yun-nan with their centre at Mt. Lao about which more would be said in the next chapter.

THE THOS AND MUONGS:

Among the other groups of the Tai the Thos and Muongs of the eastern part of Indo-China are important. The Thos⁹⁴ are mostly found to inhabit the region to the east of the Red River in Tongking and also Kwang-si in China. The word Tho is probably a local variant of "Dai" or "Doi" of Professor Coedès. They now mostly occupy the hilly areas but were the early inhabitants of Kwang-si, southern Kwei-Chow and eastern Yun-nan. The Muonga (or Mungs) of Tongking occupy the region to the west of the Red River and are presumed to be an offshoot of the great Mung (Tai) community of China. The Thos and Muongs speak a Tai dialect which is very much altered by the influence of the Chinese and Annamese languages.⁹⁵

THE PANG :

A section of the Tai, the Pang, had been flourishing in central China even from before the foundation of the ancient Shang (or In) dynasty. The Pang were called Ngao (or Yao), the great or powerful. They later became the ruling race in the powerful State of Ch'u (or T'su), a great rival of Ch'in (T'sin). They are mentioned in the ancient Chinese Annals.

⁹⁴ The Thos are sub-brachy-cephalic of lofty stature having elongated face, straight non-Mongoloid eyes and brownish complexion. They are husbandmen, living in houses built on piles and wearing a very picturesque costume. - Deniker : op.cit., pp. 400-402.

⁹⁵ Ibid., pp. 400-402.

Confucius speaks of "Our old Pang"⁹⁶ and in other records there appears "the Patriarch Pang", who ruled for an unusually long time. While Pang is the form of the name of "the Patriarch Pang", the founder of the dynasty, Pan-hu is that by which the later Chinese have heard of him among his descendants, in the province of Hunan, where they have more or less diverged from their original type. Some two thousand years before Christ the Pang were ruling in Central China in the area immediately to the north of Sze-chuan and Hupeh as contemporary of the Hsia, but their sovereignty was destroyed by Shang Wu-ting in 1231 B.C. after it had existed for more than seven hundred years. The whole period of their sovereign rule was afterwards fabulously believed to be the lifetime of their first Chief, the Patriarch Pang.⁹⁷ "The Pang or Pan-hu race", says Rev. W. E. Cochrane, "once from Central China southward, were Tai".⁹⁸

The Pan-hu were an important element among the population of an ancient State of the Karens. The earlier name of the State was Teru but in the later period it was referred to as Tzu (or Teh'u). It developed from the eleventh century B.C. under the leadership of the Karens and at the end of the fourth century B.C. it developed into a vast empire comprising the major part of South China down to about the border of Burma and a considerable portion of Central China including the larger part of Honan. Its dominions touched the sea in the

⁹⁶ Lun-yu, VII, 1.

⁹⁷ T. de Lacouperie : op. cit., xlii - xlv.

⁹⁸ Milne and Cochrane : Shang at Home, (London), 1910, p. 3.

east with the States of Ngu and Yueh forming part of them. In size the Karen empire of Tsu (Ch'u) became equal, if not more, to the grand Chinese Confederation of the time and later to Ch'in, the most formidable rival of Tsu.⁹⁹ The Karens of Teru drove to the south the King tribes from around the Tungting lake in Hunan between the Yang-tse-Kiang, the Han river and southwards and conquered that part of the country. These tribes are represented by the modern Khyens (Hlu or Shu) of Burma.¹⁰⁰ The Karens in large numbers - some 200,000 families - were expelled from South China via Yung-chang in Western Yun-nan to Burma in A.D. 778 by Ko-lo-feng, the powerful king of Nan-Chao when he destroyed the western part of the Tsuan State in northern Kwang-si. Kihlao or Kihlou tribes of Kwei-tchou, whose dialects have a great affinity with those of the Karens of Burma, are supposed to be Karens.¹⁰¹

Being driven from Central China, the Pang rulers consolidated their power in the South in the mountainous region of the Province of Hunan between the Yuan and the Wu rivers and to the west and south-west of Tung-ting lake. This part of the country was highly favourable to gratify their hatred of the Shang by whom they had been dislodged from their earlier seat in the north. They retaliated by rallying the Chou and helping them to overthrow the decaying Shang dynasty.

99 T. de Lacouperie : op.cit., xlvii - xlviii ;
 Latourette : op.cit., pp. 48, 51.

100 T. de Lacouperie : ibid., xlvii.

101 Ibid. xlvii and xlviii.

Who were the Chou? The Chou dynasty sprang from Chou, a principality in central Shen-si in the valley of the Wei, on the western frontier of the then China. The Chou supremacy (Circa 1122-249 B.C.) in China, though disturbed by constant warfare, marked an epoch of great cultural progress, which, towards the close of the Chou rule, resulted in a synthesis of different cultures, Chinese and non-Chinese, that had existed side by side among the races living round the central seat of civilization. According to Herberhard the results of recent researches indicate that the Chou (as distinguished from Chao, a Tai people) were originally a Turkish tribe with their small realm with Turkish and Tibetan populations.¹⁰² The Chou culture was closely related to that of Yang Chao. But the Chou had bronze weapons and war-chariots. Owing to repeated 'barbarian' incursions the Chou capital had to be transferred during the latter half of the eighth century B.C. from the Wei valley to Loyang, near the present Honan-fu, in the east. The Eastern Chou, possibly because of comparative security and peace, made a great progress in arts and philosophy which is comparable to that of the Greeks of the age of Plato and Aristotle. It was at this time that the "Chinese" language took its form and the "Chinese society", properly so called, was born in which the conquerors formed the ruling aristocracy and the conquered population the working classes with the peasantry as the most numerous and important group. All the changes that followed in the later periods were the results of internal development rather than of external influence.

¹⁰² W. Herberhard a. a. u. s. i. l. i. , p. 25.

In the seventh century B.C., the China of the Eastern Chou split up into five contending feudal States, which were Ch'i in the North-east in parts of Shantung and Hopei, Chin in the North in the modern Shensi, Ch'in (Ts'in) in the West in the modern Shensi, Sung on the central plain and Ch'u (T'su) in Hapeh in the South. These States entered into a long-drawn war of attrition each fighting for establishing its own supremacy over the others with temporary hegemony of one State or the other. After a prolonged struggle Ch'in¹⁰³ and Ch'u¹⁰⁴ survived as

103 The Ch'in (Ts'in) State was originally a small territory in the province of Kan-su. The eighth Emperor, Hsiao-Wang (909-895 B.C.) of Western Chou, in the second year of his reign, assigned to Fei-Tse, a scion of a family of cattle breeders, who earned a reputation of being an excellent trainer of horses for chariot regiments, the territory of Ch'in to be held as a vassal state. Thus the Ch'in State first appeared in 908 B.C. in Kan-su with Fei-Tse as its first prince. Li-Wang, the tenth Emperor (878-879 B.C.) added to the State of Ch'in more than half of Shen-si. With this acquisition of new territory Ch'in rapidly developed into a powerful State and ranked among the twelve powerful feudal States of the time. In 249 B.C. Ch'in flourished as a unified empire with thirty-six great Divisions, each ruled by a prince. In that year the thirty-sixth prince of Ch'in founded the Ch'in Dynasty and reigned under the title of Shih-Wang-Ti and the country since then has been known to the world as China. - Moontzekui : op.cit., pp. 22, 33-39 ; James Legge : Chinese Classics, vol.V, Part I, Clause xiv, "The Princes of Ts'in," pp. 110-11. A great part of the population of Ch'in, including the ruling class, was not purely Chinese but contained an admixture of Turks and Tibetans. The Chinese writers even dubbed Ch'in as a "barbarian State". Yet the name China has been derived from Ch'in with which the non-Chinese peoples from Central Asia first came into contact and called the country, conquered by Ch'in, China which became Sinae in Latin.

104 Ch'u (Tsu, Tch'u or Tso) "appears to have been almost entirely non-Chinese in race, originally non-Chinese in speech, and partly so in culture" - Latourette : op.cit., p.47. According to T. de Lacouperie "it developed itself from the eleventh century B.C. under the influence of a branch of an intrusive race, the Keren". In the early part of its development it was known as Tero or Tern, Ch'u being the modern name. - T. de Lacouperie : op.cit., xlvii.

rivals, the former establishing its dominance over the States of the North and the latter expanding in the South. In the fourth century B.C. Ch'in annexed Shu in Western Sze-Chuan and Ch'in forces successfully crossed the Yang-tse-Kiang in 279 B.C. occupying a belt in the South. Thus the struggle between Ch'in and Ch'u, the two giant States with their satellites joining this side or that in their shifting alliance, resulted ultimately in the destruction of Ch'u in 224 B.C. The fall of the strong rival made it easier for the Chinese imperialism to grow with rapid strides. The victory of the Ch'in over Ch'u was mainly due to the organizational superiority of the Ch'in army. It had been reformed on new lines largely replacing the traditional chariot by cavalry and foot soldiers.

In this connection it may be pointed out that the essentially Karen State of Teru was later transformed into a predominantly Tai State with the flower of the Pang or Pan-hu race constituting its hard core and refusing doggedly to acknowledge the suzerainty of the Chinese.¹⁰⁵ They not only put up a stubborn resistance to the aggressive policy of expansion of the northern power, but also progressively extended their territories by subjugating a score of other neighbouring States in the south. The dominion of the Ch'u State even extended beyond Yunnan to northern Burma and included what was then called the Tien or Tsen (Hsen) kingdom, which was destined to become the third great seat of power for the Tai after Ch'u. The first invasion of Burma by the Taroks from the north-east in the sixth century

105 Cochrane in Milne and Cochrane : op.cit., p. 5.

B.C. might well have been an event forming an integral part of the political expansion of Ch'u from the seventh century B.C.

The fall of Ch'u led to the consolidation of Tai power farther south in the region of Tien or Tsen (Hsen), and also the first establishment of Tai principalities, such as Hsen-Wi and Hsi-Paw, in Upper Burma in the first half of the fifth century B.C. was a sequel to the ^{conquests} loss of Ch'u. The early Tien or Tsen has possibly survived to this day in the name Hsen-Wi, which has always been the historic abode of the Tai (Shan) people and an ancient centre of their power and culture.

The Chinese Empire,¹⁰⁶ founded by Shih-Wang-Ti¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ The name Ch'in or Ts'in had found its mention, according to many oriental scholars, in the form of China in the laws of Manu, in the Mahabharata and in Kautilya's Arthashastra before the foundation of the 'Chinese Empire'. Later the foreign travellers, who visited China, spread reports of the wealth and extent of the country which was variously designated as Sin, Chin, Sinae, China, Seres (from silk), and subsequently Cathay (from Kitai, corrupted from the tribal name K'itan Tartars). It is supposed that "Sinim" of Isaiah refers to the same country. Ptolemy speaks of Sinae and Chinae. Sir R.K. Douglas suggests that Arab travellers, who are destitute of the sound of Ch, pronounce as Sinae. The author of the Periplus of the Erythraean Sea writes of Thin. See Sir Robert K. Douglas : Europe and the Far East, (Cambridge University), 1904, pp. 2-3.

¹⁰⁷ Shih-Wang-Ti, often written as Shih-Hwang-Ti or Shih-Huang-Ti, occupied the thirty-ninth place in succession in the list of Princes of Ch'in State. He overthrew the Chou dynasty and united the different divisions of the Empire under his sway. He founded the Ch'in dynasty with his capital at Hsien-Yang in Shen-si. He abolished the old Feudal System and reorganized the Empire with thirty-six territorial divisions or Provinces with a Prefect in each. Wang means Emperor and Ti also means Emperor. He claimed that his own virtues were comparable to San Wang, that is, China's three mythical Emperors, who were Divine Emperors and his services were equal to Wu-Ti, the five virtuous Emperors, namely, 1. Hwang-Ti (Circ. 2697-2596 B.C.), 2. Tuan-Yok (Circ. 2512-2435 B.C.), 3. Yao (Circ. 2357-2256 B.C.), 4. Shun (Circ. 2255-2206 B.C.) and 5. Yu (Circ. 2205-2198 B.C.). Hence he called himself both Wang and Ti. - Hoontrakul : op.cit., p. 56.

(249-210 B.C.), included large tracts of country south of the Yang-tse-Kiang, but the Chinese authority could not always be effectively exercised over the southern territories because of their distance from the capital and the violently rebellious spirit of the 'southern barbarians' who were generally Tai. Under Shi-Wang-Ti's ruthless policy of expansion the Tai suffered untold miseries, particularly those in the Tai State of Lo in Hunan, and Tai scholarship met with virtual extinction. He suppressed Confucianism and caused indiscriminately men of letters to be buried alive and the valuable ancient writings destroyed. He abolished the old feudal system. One of the reasons given by scholars for his action against the ancient literature and the men of letters of his time was that they supported the feudal ideas. Whatever may be the reason the Tai scholars and their writings suffered irreparable loss at the hands of the Emperor who wanted to suppress ideas by suppressing literatures and writers.

Great masses of Tai population, as also other barbarian groups, fled from their homes in Hunan and the neighbouring provinces to escape the oppressions of the Emperor, some taking shelter in the hills and others migrating to distant countries in the south. Those, who refused to leave their hearth and home, were always waiting for opportunities to throw off the Chinese yoke. The Han (206 B.C. - A.D. 264) extended their suzerainty of a nominal character over Yun-nan and Kwang-si, but it was costly to maintain it. Rebellions were of frequent occurrence in those parts of the Empire, to quell which there was

almost incessant fighting, at times, with heavy losses and defeats for the Imperialists. For the maintenance of political stability, however weak, in the southern frontier regions of the Empire, to which the Tai had been pressed, the Chinese government had to recognise the indigenous Chiefs and confer on them Chinese titles of office and seals in addition to their native dignity. For instance, in the latter part of the fifth century A.D. a Tai potentate of the Pan-hu race was recognized as the king of Siang-Yang in Hupeh and Governor of Kingtchou (in Southern Hupeh) by the Emperor of China. His realm, containing about 80,000 villages, covered the provinces of Central China and extended northwards to the neighbourhood of the Yellow River.¹⁰⁸ Professor Terrien de Lacouperie, from his penetrating study of the development of early Chinese polity, rightly observes that "under the cover of Chinese titles and geographical names, large regions occupied by populations entirely non-Chinese were included as homogeneous parts of the nation, with the effect of concealing the real weakness of the Chinese Empire previous to the last few centuries".¹⁰⁹ Thus the greatness of China is not all Chinese ; it can be equally claimed by other ancient races, such as the Turks, the Karens and the Tai that had lived in that vast sub-continent in the past and developed their cultures and civilization.

¹⁰⁸ Cochrane in Milne and Cochrane : op.cit., p. 5.

¹⁰⁹ T. de Lacouperie : op.cit., xxxiii.

CHAPTER II

EARLY HISTORY OF THE TAI : THE NGAI-LAO KINGDOM

The history of the East Asian regions, called China and Indo-China, is a history of vast movements of population from the north to the south from the pre-historic times and in this the Tai were one of the latest and the most important of the historical races that had migrated from their original homeland probably in the Hwang-Ho valley. Among the various causes that compelled the Tai finally to emigrate from Central China and concentrate in the Indo-Chinese Peninsula the direct one was the political pressure of the growing Chinese Empire since the middle of the third century B.C. Among other causes that drove them to the south the less hospitable natural environment of the north was undoubtedly one. This economic cause, more than anything else, had compelled the earlier hordes to expand southwards for better conditions of living. There is yet a third cause, namely, an indomitable passion for power over mankind on the part of ambitious chieftains of fighting clans. Thus in the later centuries there came from the north like avalanche, vast sweeps of conquering hordes driving huge masses of humanity before them. The powerful impacts of these races, coming one after another, forced the earlier races of Central and Southern China to move still further to the south. It appears that there was almost a ceaseless struggle among these races for the possession of the fertile river valleys of the sub-continent of China and Indo-China and those of

them that could hold these valleys for long generations got ample leisure to develop their characteristic cultures. Thus the Mon, the Khyen, the Karen, the Tai, the Chinese and the Mongols came in successive streams and, at times, in formidable waves as raiders and conquerors, driving their predecessors southward and absorbing those that would not leave their hearths and homes.

It must be remembered that the Tai are the descendants of the early imperial dynasty of Hwang-Ti and constituted the highest aristocracy in ancient China enjoying special and exclusive hereditary rights and privileges more than sixteen hundred years before the birth of the Ch'in State in Kan-su and more than two thousand three hundred years before the first appearance of the "Chinese" with imperial dignity in 249 B.C. At this later date the Tai had already formed themselves into a distinct race south of the Yang-tse-Kiang with their characteristic racial culture and tradition. Though the events of history had brought them into a long conflict with the Chinese yet from physical resemblance and linguistic affinities these two peoples appear to be cognate races. The Tai, who had been in power in China for long before the appearance of the "Chinese" on the scene, crossed the Yang-tse-Kiang at a very early time as governors of their southern dominions. In evidence of early Tai dominions in south China Nai Likhit Hoontrakul has recently brought to our notice the existence of two imperial mausoleums, now in ruins, on the south of the Yang-tse-Kiang, one of Emperor Shan (2255 - 2206 B.C.) erected on the Kiew-Yi-Shan mountain on the 'extreme southern Hu-nan province' and the other of Emperor

Yu (circ. 2208 - 2198 B.C.) erected on the Huey-Chi-Shan mountain on the south of Shao-Hing city in the province of Chekiang. These two Emperors were respectively the great grandson and a descendant of Tuan-Yok. Yu was shun's associate and later the founder of the Hsia dynasty. Moreover, the grave of the two Empresses of Emperor Shun, whose names are given as Ngo-Wang and Nu-Ying, is still standing at Tung-Ting Lake in Hu-nan. The bodies of these great Emperors and Empresses were certainly not buried in the land of the "Southern barbarians" had they latter been other than the Tai. In fact, the ancestors of the modern Tai had their feudal States south of the Yang-tse-Kiang ruled by the princes of the Imperial House. The ruined monuments also indirectly bear testimony to the fact that the ancient Tai were a cultured and civilised people and not a barbarian race as believed by many modern writers.¹

It was Shih-Wang-Ti² (249 - 210 B.C.), the Napoleon

1 Hoontrakul : *op.cit.*, pp. F-G of the Preface ; also pp. 18, 20-21 for the pictures of the mausoleums.

2 Prof. Latourette, who prefers to write Shih Huang Ti like many other European writers, interpretes that 'Shih meaning first, and Huang and Ti being titles customarily ascribed to mythical or semi-mythical rulers of antiquity - the three Huang and Five Ti. He thus gave fresh prestige to his reign and distinguished his office from that of the inept Chou. Had he been content with Wang, the designation of the Chou monarchs, he might properly have been expected to reproduce their form of government, with its disastrous decentralization.' - The Chinese : Their History and Culture, 1946, p. 90. The first explanation given elsewhere above appears to be correct as the Emperor must have adopted the titles Wang of San Wang and Ti of the later Co-Tis and the Wang of the Chou does not come in at all.

of China and founder of the Chinese Empire, that initiated the real pressure on the Tai of Hupeh and Hunan and destroyed their strength, solidarity and culture with the result that from that time onwards the Tai looked upon the Chinese as their hereditary enemy. Long centuries of struggle, in which the Tai were engaged against the Chinese with varying success, were marked by the rise of a number of powerful Tai States in South China. These States were the result of Tai consolidation in the new positions against the advancing Chinese. The Tai offered stubborn resistance to every one of the aggressions by the Empire, often themselves playing the aggressive part and making powerful incursions into the Chinese territory as opportunities occurred. Even as late as A.D. 566 Emperor Wei-Ti of the Northern Chao dynasty³ had to protect the passages of the Yangtse-Kiang, west of I-Chang, by erecting strong ramparts against the raids of the barbarians, who were apparently Tai, the regnant race throughout that region.⁴

The first series of struggles of the Tai against the Chinese came to a close in the last quarter of the third century B.C. with the destruction of the great kingdom of Ch'u (T'su) in Central China in which the Tai were strong rivals of the Chinese. The fall of the Ch'u kingdom was followed by the rise of a number of Tai kingdoms in the region of Sze-chuan and Yun-nan

³ This Chao dynasty belonged to the Hsiung Nu (Hsiung Nu), a non-Chinese race that destroyed the Western Chin and established their rule in Pei (Northern) Han which it founded. But this Chao dynasty was different from the Chao, a Tai people already mentioned. - Latourette : *op.cit.*, pp. 150-51.

⁴ GUBSS.1.1, p. 192 ; Milne and Cochrane : *op.cit.*, p. 5.

and subsequently also in northern Burma and the Mekong valley in French Indo-China. Towards the end of the fourth century B.C. the Ch'u kingdom became an extensive empire threatening the security of north China then under the hegemony of the Ch'in State. Ch'u annexed a number of States in the north including one called Lo, created originally by Chong-kang, the fourth Emperor of the Hsia (Hsia) dynasty. Two ministers of the Emperor (2158-2146 B.C.) Hi and Ho rose in revolt against him, but a general named Mi-Yen, a descendant of Emperor Tuen Yok and of Tai-Tai hereditary family, was asked by the Emperor to lead an expedition against the rebels. Mi-Yen succeeded in putting down the revolt after heavy fighting. The ancient historical work, Yen the Conqueror, contains an account of this great civil war. As a reward the Emperor conferred upon the victorious General the hereditary title of "Marquis of Lo" and made him a feudatory ruler of the State of Lo in Hu-peh. The Lo people⁵ were descended from Tai-Tai ancestors and were probably vested with the right to levy duties on the waterways of the Yang-tse-Kiang during the period of the Hsia dynasty.

The Lo State was at first in the district of Yi-chen in northern Hupeh, but was later transferred to Ki-kiang district of southern Hupeh on the north bank of the Yang-tse-Kiang. It appears that the province of Hupeh was reorganized in the meantime.

⁵ It is said that Lo character is composed of two letters, viz., "Szu" is the upper one and means Four; "Wei" is the lower one and means Factors. "Szu-Wei" means, in Chinese, "the four factors of national maintenance": (1) Prosperity, (2) Rightness, (3) Frugality and (4) Shame. The factors are greatly valued in the heart of the Lo people (who are identified as Tai people) upto the present day. - Vide Moontraku: op.cit., p. 25.

The State was ruled by Tai princes and was able to maintain its continued existence for many centuries without much harm to its territorial integrity from outside enemies. But in 689 B.C., which was also the twentieth year of the reign of the Eastern Chou Emperor, Huan-Wang, the king of the powerful State of Ch'u invaded Lo. But the invading army was badly defeated by the Lo forces. In 698 B.C. Tso-Fen-Wang, the son of Tso-Wu-Wang, made a second invasion of the Lo State and compelled the Tai Marquis of Lo to submit to and accept the suzerainty of Ch'u. Lo was probably wrested by Ch'u from the Chou. The Marquis was then ordered to leave Ki-kiang and settle at Ping Kiang in Hu-nan on the south of the Yang-tse-Kiang. The Tai people, who had their original home in Hupeh and Honan, also migrated in great numbers to the south.

The greatest calamity that overtook the Tai people of Central and Southern China was when Shih-Wang-Ti raised an army of 600,000 men under the command of General Wang-Chien and invaded the State of Ch'u in 224 B.C. Shih-Wang-Ti had built his capital at Hsien-Yang in Shen-si from where all these gigantic war preparations were directed. Ch'u was then a large State comprising the southern part of Hupeh, Hunan, Kiang-si, Kwei-chow and the northern parts of Kwang-si and Kwang-tung. The war that took place ended with disastrous results for Ch'u. Being heavily defeated the Prince of Ch'u had to sue for peace. Shih-Wang-Ti banished him to Sew-chun in An-hui. The Marquis of Lo, the vassal prince of Ch'u, was also transferred to the newly conquered district of Shu in western Sze-chuen as its sub-prefect. The Lo State in Hu-nan thus came to an end.

As a sequel to all these revolutionary changes in the political set-up of these conquered territories with their tremendous social consequences those Tai or Lo people, who clung to their native homeland, had to break up in the years that followed and distribute themselves in various localities of the southern Provinces of China. These localities with Lo-Tai populations grew up into cities which were named after them as Lo-Shan in Hu-nan, Lo-Yuan in Fu-Kian, Lo-Tao and Lo-Huo in Kwei-chow, Lo-Cheng in Kwang-si, and Lo-Ting in Kwang-tung. Even to this day Tai communities are found in these areas who speak a mixed Tai language.⁶ That the Lo people were so scattered might well be also an act of policy on the part of the Chinese government to weaken them and effect their merger with the Chinese.

Those Tai people of the Lo State, who found it impossible to continue as a subject race under the Chinese and refused to accept the humiliating status of being called 'the people of Ch'in', preferred to quit their homes for even the wilds of Chang-sha and Hsiang comprising the modern Provinces of Hu-nan, Kwang-si and Kwang-tung. They formed their settlements in the hill tracts of those provinces and were referred to as Hill Tribes by the local plains peoples though they called themselves Tai of the ancient Tai-Tai families. Later on they migrated to the north-western part of Indo-China, most probably by the Black River valley, and set up along the south-western side of that river a State called Hsip-Hsawng-Chu-Tai. This

⁶ Hoontrakul : op.cit., pp. 61-2.

branch of the Tai also constitutes the population of the Laos kingdom founded by a powerful Tai chieftain, Fa Ngoun the ^{-Middle} Conqueror, in the Upper/Mekong valley in 1353. This Laos kingdom, then called the kingdom of Lan Chang (later Luang Prabang or more properly Luang Phra Tang) was the result of the union of a number of Laos or Tai States under the leadership of Fa Ngoun and it extended from Hsip-Hawng-Panna to the northern borders of Cambodia. It later formed one of the three Associated States within the French Union.⁷ Both the Pai-Yi and Ngai-Lao legends agree that the Laotians are of the same group as the Pai-Yi of South China.⁸ Probably towards the close of the thirteenth century A.D. or early in the fourteenth these people moved down the Nam-Hou (Nam U) from their earlier home around Dieng-Bien-phai, in Hsip-Hawng-Chu-Tai in what is now Sengkong, into the Mekong valley. They not only occupied the middle Mekong, but, as pointed out by Briggs, they seem to have spread like a layer over the other Tai of neighbouring regions.⁹

A large section of the Tai population of the State of Lo also followed the Marquis of Lo to Shu when the latter was transferred to that district. But these Tai people in Shu were not allowed to have peace by the Chinese government. All able-bodied men were forced to leave their homes to construct roads and bridges throughout the Empire and to build up the Great Wall of about 2,500 miles in length. It is said that every

7 Honthrakul : op.cit., p.62 ; Hall : op.cit., p.207.

8 JACS, vol. 69, 1949, pp. 64-5.

9 Ibid. p. 70.

third man in the Empire was summoned to work upon the Great Wall which was completed in five years under the supervision of General Meng-Tien. Most of the Tai conscript labour perished under the rigorous conditions of the works and those that survived fled into the wilds of Sze-chuan, Yun-nan and Kwei-chow, then called Shu, Chien-chung and Kuei-lin respectively, in order to escape the oppressions of the Chinese task-masters.

Shih-Wang-Ti reorganized his administrative system and divided the territory of his Empire into thirty-six Provinces each of which was governed by a Prefect. He abolished the old feudal system which was originally introduced by Emperor Yu (Circ. 2208-2198 B.C.) of Hsia and prohibited the study of Confucius. In 214 B.C. he issued orders to seize and destroy all classical books, particularly those of Confucius, except the books on agriculture, medicine and the divining art. He did not spare the books containing ideas in support of feudalism. Huge stacks of books so seized were burnt away. To avert the penalty of death the book-sellers throughout the whole empire closed their shops and burnt their books. The Emperor also caused four hundred and sixty men of letters to be buried alive probably because they had remonstrated with him on his mad act of destruction of the valuable ancient writings. He even punished his own son Hu-Su with imprisonment for expressing disapproval of his measures. The Tai, who had been a cultured people being of the princely rank in early time, were in possession of a rich heritage of art and literature at the time of Shih-Wang-Ti, but the men of letters among the Tai and their literary works were so completely des-

troyed in this wild act of persecution that from that time the Tai in the Empire became almost an illiterate race through lack of books and teachers. In a few decades following this tragic event these descendants of the once highest class of nobility degenerated into being Hill Tribes,¹⁰ or rather many of them got merged with the Hill Tribes living in the inaccessible mountainous regions. Those who took shelter in the highlands of Sze-chuan, Yun-nan and Kwei-chow call themselves Tai or Chai to this day. As men of the wild country they became known as 'barbarians'.¹¹

There were also a number of hill tribes in the southern Provinces of Hu-nan, Kwang-si and Kwang-tung including some of the Lais who were the descendants of early feudal rulers or Marquises created by Emperor Seow-Hao in the third millennium B.C. and who had come and settled in those areas long before the rise of the Chinese Empire. They were later discovered by the Chinese in the period of the Han, whose dominions extended far to the south. These hill tribes, who were mostly Tai, still contemptuously refer to the Chinese by the nickname of "Ping-Ti-Ken", meaning Plateau Traitors. These Tai used to migrate

¹⁰ Twelve such tribes are mentioned, nine Lais and three Miaos. The Lais are found also among the southern Chin tribes of the Chin Hills between Assam and Burma. The Miaos, so called by the Shans, are really Meng or Hmeng. They are called Miaotzu by the Chinese. They are supposed to be of the Mon race. "The Mons would thus stand in the same relation to the Hmeng that the Siamese do to the Tai Long of the Shweli neighbourhoods". This race comprises nearly one half of the population of the province of Kwei-chow and is also very numerous in Kiang-si and neighbouring provinces. - Hoontrakul : op.cit., p. 63. : GUBSS, I. I., pp. 454, 597-601.

¹¹ Hoontrakul : op.cit., pp. 58-63.

in small groups to the southern countries as peaceful settlers of the plains regions, but they would also move in large masses in the event of a war or large-scale repression by the Chinese within the Empire. The routes these migrants usually followed, particularly in descending from the hills, were the river valleys which open out in the lower courses into wide tracts of fertile plains. Thus these people entered Upper Burma through the valleys of the Salween, Nam-ting and Taping ; Siam through the Me-nam and Me-ping valleys ; and French Indo-China through the Mekong, the Black and the Red Rivers and settled down in the rich rice-growing areas of those countries.

There was also a great concentration of the Tai and other non-Chinese 'barbarians', such as the Lolo, the Miao and the Minchia in the south-western part of Yun-nan from the continual flow of populations from the north and north-east owing to Chinese pressure. Two instances of this early pressure on the Tai are mentioned in the records of the Chinese - one on the Ai-Lao (Ngai-Lao), locally called Pa, in Sze-chuan in 338 B.C. by the State of Ch'in and another on Ch'u in 224 B.C. by imperial China which seriously affected the Ai-Lao in the Lao-Shan - Kiu-lung range, both causing the local tribes to move en masse to the south. It was this vast agglomeration of tribes with the Tai (Ngai-Lao) as the central ruling group that constituted the strength of a rival empire called Nan-Chao by the Chinese. The early history of Nan-Chao is thus the history of the branch of the Tai called Ai-Lao or Ngai-Lao, who had already established a

small kingdom in Yung-Chang¹² in Yun-nan. The appearance of the Ngai-Lao in Yun-nan as a ruling race in the first century of the Christian era was preceded by a dark period of over two centuries. These Ngai-Lao entered and settled in that area as the result of a vast wave of migration of population to western Yun-nan from their earlier home and shelter in the Lao shan and Kiu-lung mountains when the Ch'in army, in the war against Ch'u, swept across these ranges in 224 B.C. from east to west annexing Sze-chuan (Shu).¹³ This great drive by the Chinese imperial army in the southern country led to a large - scale dispersal of the populations of Sze-chuan, the Ngai-Lao race being broken up and driven away further to the south and south-west. But in the subsequent decades these peoples regrouped themselves in various localities amid the hills and plains of Yun-nan and set up a number of small principalities, six of which are well-known in the history of Yun-nan. One of these principalities was that of the Ngai-Lao founded by one Prince Chia-lung. This principality is historically important as the original foundation of Nan-Chao.

It would be of interest to digress here for a moment to refer to a Chinese work of the sixteenth century A.D., called

12 Major Davies tells us that "Yung-Ch'ang is merely a corruption of Wan-S'ang, the name by which this place is still known to the Shans" - Yun-nan, p. 379.

13 T. de Lacouperie : op.cit., p. lii ; Dodds : op.cit., Chap. I.

A History of the Southern Princes,¹⁴ by an author, named Yang-Tsai, of Chen-T'u-fu in the province of Sze-chuan which traces the descent of Prince Chiu-lung from king Asoka of Magadha (264-228 B.C.) in the direct line.¹⁵ This legend of Asoka showing relationship between the ruling dynasties of Yun-nan and Magadha is also current in the local Buddhist tradition in Yun-nan. It is said that Avolokitesvara came from India and converted the country to Buddhism. Early cultural relations between India and these Far-Eastern countries are well-known. They were established and maintained mostly by Buddhist missionaries, who travelled by overland routes from India to those countries. Pelliot argues with much reason that Nan-Chao received Buddhist influences from India via the P'iao of Burma.¹⁶ The routes lay through Eastern Bengal, Manipur and Arakan and probably it was by this route that the Sakya princes, Abhi Raja in 923 B.C.

¹⁴ This work was collected at Tali-fu in Yun-nan by an English missionary named G.W. Clark and was translated into English by him with the assistance of a local Chinese scholar. The manuscript was written in A.D. 1537 by Yang-tsai of Chen-t'u-fu in Sze-chuan and reedited by Hu-Yu of Yuchang-fu in Hu-peh in 1776. Clark published the English translation of the manuscript in a small book printed at the Shanghai Mercury Press in 1894 in a very limited number of copies for distribution among his friends. This book is unknown in the libraries of Europe and America. Only four copies were there with the translator of which one was borrowed by M. Carthew, M.D. (Phya Ayurved Vichakshana), who has, from his notes taken from the book, contributed an article under the heading "The History of the Thai in Yun-nan", 2205 B.C. - A.D. 1253 to JSS., vol. XL, Part I, July, 1952, pp. 1-38. The present introduction is from the information given by M. Carthew. This work gives a connected account of the Tai rule in Yun-nan from the earliest times down to the fall of Nan-Chao in 1254.

¹⁵ M. Carthew : "The History of the Thai in Yun-nan" in JSS, ibid., pp. 1, 6-7.

¹⁶ Deux Itinéraires, pp. 154-83.

and Dhaja Raja in 523 B.C. (or 519 B.C.) reached Burma. There is no mention of any journey by sea at that early period.¹⁷

The northern part of the Kube valley, which was on the direct route from Manipur to Burma, is still called Mauriya or Maura, said to be the name of the tribe to which king Asoka belonged.¹⁸

The Kube valley, specially its northern part, was inhabited by Tai people from before the sixth century A.D. We know from Francis Buchanan's investigations that the Tai-long or the great Tai were called Maitay Kabo (Kube) by the people of Cassay (Manipur). This Tai community settled in the upper part of the river Chindwin.¹⁹ Further, being the grandson of Candragupta, who was probably of Sabara or Kirata (i.e. Sudra) and hence Mongoloid stock,²⁰ as indicated in the drama

17 GUBBS, 1.1, pp. 217-18.

18 Phayre : History of Burma, London, 1883, pp. 6-7, 15.

19 F. Buchanan : "A Comparative Vocabulary of Some of the Languages Spoken in the Burma Empire" in Asiatic Researches : vol. V, 4th Ed., 1807, p. 228.

20 Candragupta's father Murya was son of king Sarvarthasiddhi of Pataliputa (Pataliputra, Kusumapura or Puspapura) by his Sudra wife Mura the daughter of a charioteer, Suta. He was a half-brother of the 'Nine Nandas', all again his sons by his elder wife Sumanda, born of a Ksatriya family. Mura probably belonged to the Muriya clan of the Sakyas from which Candragupta was called Murya or Murya-putra. He was also called Vraata (Sudra) by Canakya - See the historical drama Mudraraksasa by Visakhadatta, Act I ; also The Mudraraksasa-natakakatha of Mahadeva, ed. by Dr. V. Raghavan, The Sarasvati Mahal Series I, 1946, pp. 23-4. The land of the Muriyas was Pippalivana. Candragupta is said to have got his name from a bull named Canda, who guarded him during infancy. The Greeks, unable to pronounce properly, called him by various names, all variants of Candragupta. Thus he was called Xandrames by Diodoros, Androkottos by Plutarch and Sandrocottus by Justin. Derivation Murya from Mura is rejected by historians, according to whom that derivation would be Maureya. The Jain versions speak of Nanda as base-born and Candragupta as born in a family of peacock-farmers (Mayuraprasaka) and Buddhistic versions assign Candragupta to a Ksatriya tribe called Muriyas related to the Sakyas and living generally near Nepal i.e. Pippalivana. - Raghavan : op.cit., (Ed.) Notes, pp. V-VI.

Mudrarakassa, Code of Manu and the Mahabharata, Asoka may be assumed to be a non-Aryan ruler of Magadha. Hence the possibility of his racial affinity with the Mongoloid peoples of Yun-nan or Burma is not to be brushed aside on sentimental grounds. Even Canshya calls Candragupta (Candagutta) by the name of Vrsala Maurya, Vrsala being a denomination which means a class of wild tribes in which the Kiratas and Sabaras are included. It was perhaps after his great military success against the Nandas that Candragupta was given the Ksatriya status, an instance not uncommon in India even to recent times.²¹ In this context it is quite possible to show some sort of a legendary connection of Asoka with the contemporary Yun-nan dynasty. But it was perhaps the Buddhist missionary enterprise more than anything else that was responsible for the glorification of Asoka's name everywhere in the Buddhist world and the Asoka legend in Yun-nan is but an instance of it rather than any direct

²¹ See also The Wild Tribes in Indian History by Dr. B. A. Salatore, Lahore, Motilal Banarsai Das, 1935, pp. 49-50.

blood relation with the reigning family of Yun-nan.²² Asoka's actual visit to Yun-nan is not known from the records available in India, nor is Asoka's life fully known from these records. Apart from his religious missions, his political relations with the Far East, if any, constitute a subject of immense value which has not yet been investigated with a view to establish new facts.

Now, to go back to the history of the Ngai-Lao kingdom, we have to recall the history of the earlier kingdom of Ch'u

²² It is even stated in the History of the Southern Princes that "King Asoka of Magadha lived for a time at Tali-fu, then ruled over by an Indian prince, and that he there married a princess from Tali-fu called Ch'ien-meng-kui. By her he had three sons, the eldest being called Ti-meng-ch'ien-fu-le. The latter's eldest son was called Meng-cu-fu and he became the ancestor of the 'sixteen kingdoms'. One of his descendants in the direct line, Prince Jen-kue, became King of Tien (Yun-nan), 122-117 B.C., and from the latter was descended the long line of the kings of Nan-Chao". G. U. Clark further draws our attention to the fact that "the country around Tali-fu to this day (1890) is full of legends of King Asoka and his three sons and there are still many annual ceremonies carried out by the local Thai in memory of his sons" - M. Carthew: "The History of the Thai in Yun-nan" in JSS, vol. XL, Part I, 1952, pp. 3-4. Moontrakul also refers to this legend, which G. Cordier obtained from a Chinese book the title of which is translated as The Private History of Nan-Chao. In this book there is mention of Asoka's queen and his nine sons instead of three. The names of the queen and of the eldest son are the same as those mentioned above with slight phonetic variation. Asoka is called A-Yu-Wang and king of Mahagada (Pali) or Magadha in India and his nine sons are said to be the ancestors respectively of the tribes of Yun-nan, the Tibetans, the Chinese, the Miao tribes in the east, the ruling Meng family of Nan-Chao, the Ceylonese, the Annamites, the Yin-Kwa tribe who reigned in Pai-Se kingdom near Tali and the Pai-yi tribe, the Tai of southern Yun-nan and the Laos. - Moontrakul: op. cit., pp. 129-30, also La Province du Yunnan by Cordier, "Legendary period", pp. 532-34.

which became essentially Tai in later periods. Towards the close of the fourth century B.C. Ch'u commanded a vast territory extending from the sea in the east to Sze-chuan in the west covering its eastern part and from the middle of Honan in the north to the Nan-ling mountains in the south. The border States of Ngu (Wu) and Yeh in the east, the whole of Kwei-chow and northern Yun-nan were brought under its sway. But after its conquest by Ch'in in 224 B.C. it was not much known for several centuries. In the third century A.D. Ch'u again came into the picture with a territory greatly reduced. It then possessed only parts of Sze-chuan and Yun-nan, and later still its authority was confined to Yun-nan only. It seems the Chinese extended their suzerainty over the principalities of Yun-nan and Sze-chuan as early as the first century A.D., but that suzerainty was more or less nominal and unstable. By the third century A.D. there already came into existence a powerful kingdom in western Yun-nan under the Ngai-Lao. In the middle of the seventh century A.D. the Ngai-Lao defeated the Chinese and extended their power over Lower Sze-chuan and the neighbouring territories. Chinese records mention that Tali-fu was the kingdom of the Ngai-Lao in the first century A.D. when for the first time the Chinese came into clash with them. In the subsequent period they were probably ousted from that area by the Chinese, whereupon they consolidated their position further south-west and began to grow and expand and forced the Chinese to give up a large part of their southern domains. To the Chinese these Tai of South China were known as Ai-Lao or simply Lao.²³

²³ Brian Harrison : South-East Asia, New York, 1954, Macmillan, p. 38.

About the early history of the Ngai-Lao or Ai-Lao (old pron. ai-lau) our only source of information is the Chinese Annals. It was E. H. Parker who did the pioneering work of translating a mass of such Annals collected in the border States of Burma and China. Mr. Parker says referring chiefly to the Annals of the T'ang dynasty, which are more than a thousand years old : "The Chinese had clearly defined relations with the Shan or Ai-Lao Empire of (modern) Tali-fu in the first century of our era, and in A.D. 90 (elsewhere the date A.D. 97 is given) one Yung Mu, King of T'an, sent tribute to China through the good offices of the Ai-Lao, receiving an official seal from China. The Chinese seem to take it for granted that Yung Mu of T'an was of the same race as a later Pyu (Burmese) king named Yung K'iang."²⁴

The legendary origin of the Ngai-Lao is narrated in the Chinese records²⁵ in the form of a story thus :

"According to them, there was originally a woman called Sha-i (or Sha-yn, or Cha-yi, wife of Te-mou²⁶), who dwelt on Mt. Lao and used to catch fish. While she was in the

²⁴ GUBBS, I. I., p. 260.

Yung K'iang may be simply the Chinese transformation of Burmese Aung K'iang so as to fit in with their conception of 'Hsing' or clan names ; for the Chinese annalists had the habit of presenting things in such a manner as to conform to Chinese ways. Even as late as the eighteenth century the Chinese referred to Alaungpaya, who assumed the title of Aung Zeya (the Victorious), as of the Yung family. - Sir J. George Scott : Burma and Beyond, 1932, p. 213.

²⁵ Hou Han Shu, Ch. 116, f5, recto. "Ngai-Lao Barbarians".

²⁶ T. de Lacouperie : op. cit., p. lii. Shan word is Hsai, meaning sand, for Sha-i. Te-mou is probably Ti Mong-tseu of the Ngai-Lao legend as described below.

water she struck against a sunken log,²⁷ as if in the act of kind, and as a result she conceived and in the tenth month gave birth to ten sons. After this the sunken log transformed itself into a dragon and came out on the surface of the water. She-i suddenly heard the dragon speaking. It said : Thou hast borne me sons. Where are they now ? Nine of the sons, on seeing the dragon, were startled and fled. Only the youngest son, who was unable to go, sat down with his back to the dragon, and the dragon licked him ; therefore his mother called her son Chiu-lung (or Kiu-lung),²⁸ Chiu or Kiu meaning 'back' and lung meaning 'to sit'. And afterwards when he grew up, his elder brothers, considering that Chiu-lung had been licked by his father, and that he was shrewd, all joined in electing him king. After this, below Mt. Lao, there were husband and wife to whom in due course there were born ten daughters.²⁹ Chiu-lung and his brothers all took these daughters to wife, and after a time they gradually multiplied plentifully. The tribesmen all tattooed their bodies with figures of elephants and dragons and their clothes shewed tails".

²⁷ The legend behind this sunken log is that king Asoka's fifth son Meng-su-Tok, who was the ancestor of the famous ruling Heng family of Nan-Chao, while fishing in the lake Yi-Lo, situated on the south of the present Pao-Shan in Yün-nan, was drowned and his remains were transformed into a trunk of tree. - Cordier : ibid. pp. 532-34, referred to by Hoontrakul in his book The Historical Records etc. p. 130.

²⁸ Chiu = Kiu, pronounced Chiu.

²⁹ T. de Lacouperie seems to believe that they were of the Man stock, op.cit., p. lii. It may be noted that the Chinese call the barbarians of Southern China 'Man'. JAOS, vol. 69, 1949, p. 64.

This account is the priestly invention of a race of people among whom the dragon worship was the dominant cult, the Indian counterpart of which is the Naga cult. Pelliot points out that the Chinese have hsiang lung, "elephant - dragon", both of which were used to translate the Sanskrit word naga. The lung, or "dragon", is the most familiar mythological creature which has a large place not only in the popular mind but also in Chinese literature. The Dragon is regarded as benevolent and is associated with divine forces and with rain, clouds and water.³⁰ Its Indian equivalent is undoubtedly Naga.³¹

³⁰ Latourette : op.cit., p. 649.

³¹ M.L. Binot has grouped together a certain number of epigraphic and literary data referring to this legend. His collections show that the tale of the Naga was very ancient in Indo-China and it already appeared in the Chinese Texts of the sixth century relating to Funan (Cambodia) - Note D :- "The Legends of the Naga and the Apsaras" by Victor Goloubew, translated from Bulletin De l'Ecole Francaise D'Extreme - Orient, vol. 24, 1924, p. 501 ff. Reproduced in Administration and Social Life under the Pallavas by Dr. C. Minakshi, pp. 25-34. The name Kambuja (Cambodia) owes its origin to Kambu Svayambhuva, the king of Aryadesa, who married the Naga king's daughter and became king of that country. H.G. Coedes called attention to the existence in South India of two inscriptions dating from the Pallavas. The epigraphical texts belong to the eleventh century A.D., the date being disputed, however, by Dr. Minakshi and others. The first of these documents, a charter of Skanda Sisy, assigns a Naga as wife of king Agvattama, the son of Drona, whom the Pallavas venerated as one of their ancestors. As to the second, a charter of Nandivarman III, there is mentioned among the Pallava kings a legendary Virakura who married a Princess of Ophidian Stock and obtained from her "the insignia of royalty". It may be that the Naga Princes, who reigned in the Deccan and Central India, believed themselves to be of Naga origin. - Note D :- op.cit. Whether the Naga or the Dragon cult originally migrated from India to China or from China to India is not definitely known, but that there was in the past a long period when the Dragon worship was popular among the tribes of East Asia is a historical fact.

But the Ngai-Lao (Nan-Chao) legend³² itself says that Ti Mong-tseu had nine sons, who became the ancestors, respectively of (1) the Tai-Yai (Shans), (2) Tibetans, (3) Chinese, (4) Man, (5) the Ngai-Lao dynasty of Nan-Chao, (6) Ceylonese, (7) Annamites, (8) the Pai-tseu kingdom of Yun-nan and (9) the Pai-Yi of lower Yun-nan and Upper Laos. Of these groups only four are Tai, namely, the Tai-Yai (Shans), the Ngai-Lao, the Pai-tseu and the Pai-Yi, and the rest are obviously non-Tai. But the striking fact is that all these peoples, Tai or non-Tai, are Buddhists and the legend does not antedate their conversion to Buddhism, particularly of the Singhalese creed (Thera-vada). Again the Pai-Yi legend asserts that the Laotians proper, Pu-Luns and the Tai of Tongking belong to the Pai-Yi family.³³ If these legends are true then the Ngai-Lao and the Lao (Laotians) are two different branches of the same original stock.

According to some authorities the name of the race, called Ngai-Lao, has originated from the name of a place of that name. Regarding the place name Ngai-Lao Sainson has identified it with Mt. T'ien-ching in the prefecture of Yung-Ch'ang. It is from here that the Ngai-Lao kingdom is said to have developed. Sainson says Mt. Chiu-lung is south of Yung-Ch'ang Fu, and the Chiu-lung river is also frequently found as another name for the river Mekong in the Hsip-Hsawng-Panna.³⁴ The

32 Nan-tcheo ye-tche 24-5.

33 JACS, vol. 69, 1949, p. 64.

34 BEFE-O, 1908, p. 152. n6.

home of the Ngai-Lao thus appears to have been on, or west of, the Mekong, not far from Yung-ch'ang.³⁵ Chavannes alludes to a note of Hui-lin according to which "Tsang-ko was the name of a tribe situated in the extreme south west of China and it is also the name of the territory where they dwelt. ... The old name for this country was Ngai-lao, from which we get the name Laos".³⁶ But Professor T. de Lacouperie says that the Lao Shan (i.e. Lao mountain) is situated, according to the tradition of the Ngai-Lao race, at the intersection of the modern provinces of Honan, Hupen and An-hui in the eastern part of Central China.³⁷ Dr. Dodds who, probably not knowing that another mountain of the same name also exists in Yun-nan, accepts the location of the Lao mountain as described by T. de Lacouperie and tells us that the Lao mountains are said, by tradition, to be named for the Lao race. He further points out that "the cognate forms of the name Lao, such as Leao, Chao, Ngai-Lao, Shen-Lao etc., were common all along the whole range from An-hui to Sze-chuan. The Ai-Lao, also called Ngai-Lao, extended well westward along this Lao-Shan and its continuation, the Kiu-lung range. Westward of this chief center of the Ngai-Lao, but still hugging the foot of the Kiu-lung, were the Leao, as their name was locally pronounced. But when the Tsin advanced over this range further west, into Ssu-chuan, in the third century B.C., they found the

³⁵ Parker on the Ngai-Lao, *JRSB*, vol. xiv, Part II, p.100.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 139.

³⁷ T. de Lacouperie : *op.cit.*, p. lii.

race, locally known there as Ai-Lao, although the tribal names were still in vogue, Mung, Lung, Pa, etc., as is evidenced by their persistence down to the present time.³⁸ The above geographical descriptions point to two areas called Lao Shan in which the Ngai-Lao had their abode, one in the north and the other in the south-west part of Yun-nan, both being important perhaps in two different periods of history. Mt. Lao or Ngai-Lao in the prefecture of Yung-Ch'ang was probably named after the new racial appellation Lao, acquired by the Tai, as the inhabitants of Lao-Shan in the north. These Ngai-Lao, after being driven from their northern seat by the Chinese, crossed the Yang-tse-Kiang and extended their sway over western Yun-nan with Tali-fu as their capital. They must have concentrated themselves in Yung-Ch'ang, after the surrender of the rulers of Tali-fu, making it their second seat of power.

After the third century B.C. the Chinese next heard of the Ngai-Lao in A.D. 47 during the reign of the Later or Eastern Han (A.D. 25-221), or even much earlier as some Annals indicate. In that year the Ngai-Lao king Hsien-li (or Hien-lih), who flourished many generations after their progenitor Chiu-lung, sent warriors to the south down the Chiang (or Kiang)-Han on rafts made of bamboo and wood to attack the Lu-to barbarians on the frontier. Here a difficult geographical question arises. If we accept the position of the Lao-Shan to be at the intersection of the provinces of Honan, Hupeh and Ngan-huy (Ngan-hui) as pointed out by Prof. T. de Lacouperie then it is quite possible that the troops of Hsien-

38 Dodds : op.cit., Chap. I.

it descended on rafts by the Chiang-Han, a great tributary of the Yang-tse-Kiang, which flows from the north-west to south-east down the adjoining valley on the west and south of the Loo-Shan, the State of the Ngai-Lao. But this northern seat of Ngai-Lao power, if there was one at all, could not have existed in the first century A.D. after the conquest of that area by the Chinese in the first quarter of the third century B.C., for the invasion drove most of the local tribes to the south of the Yang-tse-Kiang. If, on the other hand, Tali-fu, as mentioned by Pauther, be the seat of the Ngai-Lao kingdom at that time, then it is not easy to see how any river of the name of Chiang-Han, flowing south from Yung-Ch'ang, could lead to the Chinese frontier. The only possible river of that name is one that flows through Kwang-tung, but it is to the farther east. The reference may be to the Black or the Red River, or one of their tributaries, flowing south-east to Chiao-Chih (Tongking) as one commentator suggests.³⁹ But in this connection it should be remembered that in the first century of the Christian era the Ngai-Lao had already lost their political hold on northern Loo-Shan and had concentrated themselves in the western part of Yun-nan (Tali-fu), from where they led a number of expeditions down the river-ways to the Chinese border territories in Tongking inhabited by the unruly Lu-to.

The result of the Ngai-Lao campaign against the Lu-to men was that the latter were subdued and many taken

³⁹ JRS, vol. xiv, Part II, p. 112.

as captives by the Ngai-Lao generals. But on way back Hsien-li's army was overwhelmed by a sudden stormy wind blowing upstream from the south accompanied with thunder-quake and rain. The violence of the wind sank most of the loaded crafts and several thousand Ngai-Lao troops with their captives were drowned. This disaster virtually undid the effect of the victory and Hsien-li had to send a second expedition of ten thousand men under six generals to attack the tribe. But to the utter surprise of the Ngai-Lao Chief all his six generals were killed by the tribesmen and the expeditionary force badly defeated. Being unnerved at this unexpected disaster Hsien-li called the Elders and said to them : "We have entered the frontier from of old, and now we are attacking the Lu-to. Immediately we are punished by heaven. Have they got in the Middle Kingdom a holy Emperor ? Otherwise, how can heaven so manifestly help and protect them" ?

It appears that either the Lu-to tribesmen were under the Empire receiving protection from it or in attacking them the Ngai-Lao forces crossed the frontier and violated the Chinese territory,⁴⁰ in consequence whereof they met with defeat at the hands of the Chinese. Probably prior to this event the Chinese dominions had not extended so far, or even if they had, the Chinese control over this part of the country

40 GUBBS, I. I, p. 261.

had been nominal and incapable of preventing the raids of the Ngai-Lao. The words addressed to the Elders by Hsien-li, however, indicate that the Ngai-Lao king already knew that the Lu-to people were under the protection of the Middle Kingdom. Hence as a sequel to his defeat Hsien-li in A.D. 51, with other subordinate chiefs and 2,770 families of tribesmen in alliance with him consisting of 17,659 persons, went and submitted to Cheng Hing, the Prefect of Yueh-sui for admission to the Empire. Kuang-Wu, the first Emperor of the Later Han, was then pleased to appoint Hsien-li and the headmen, who accompanied him, as Chieftains tributary to China.⁴¹

⁴¹ JBES, vol. xiv, Part II, pp. 112-13 : "The Tan and the Ngai-Lao", *Hou Han Shu*, ch. 116, f5 recto : "Ngai-Lao Barbarians".

The position of the prefecture of Yueh-sui, as mentioned above, is of importance as a part of the Chinese Empire in the south. Mr. Parker places Yueh-sui between the Ya-lung and Yang-tse rivers in south-west Sze-chuan. But according to Sainson "Yueh-sui ting is north of Ming-Yuan fu in south Sze-chuan, north of the Yang-tse". (see *Nantchoo yestone*, p. 11, n8, and map.) Yueh-sui and I-chou prefectures were first established by Han Wu Ti (140-87 B.C.) in 111 B.C. and 109 B.C. respectively. It is further said that Chiung-tu (Cheng-tu), which was to the north of Tien, was organized into Yueh-sui prefecture in the aforesaid year. (Ref. *Shih chi*, 116, f. 2 verso : *Chien han shu*, ch. 28A, f. 11 verso ; *Hou han shu*, ch. 33, f. 1, verso - 2 recto). But Chavannes, on the authority of *Tung chien kang mu* (under year A.D. 272), says that I-chou "corresponds to the prefecture of Cheng-tu in Ssu-chuan". (REFO-C, 1903, p. 232, n 5). According to *Shih chi* I-chou prefecture was formed out of the old kingdom of Tien (Yun-nan-fu). Nai Likhit Hoontrakul points out that in 105 B.C. I-chou was but the present city of Kun-Ming (Yun-nan-fu) in Yun-nan. In that year I-chou was involved in trouble for which a royal expedition was sent from the Chinese capital to restore tranquillity in the city. - Hoontrakul : op.cit., p. 68. It may be that the pressure and expansion of the Ngai-Lao had caused such a shrinkage of the prefecture of I-chou that it was probably placed under the prefecture of Yueh-sui so that the Ngai-Lao had to submit to the Prefect of the latter province instead of that of I-chou which had no separate existence.

Ma Touan-lin, who says that, in the Chien wa period (A.D. 25-55) the king of the Ngai-Lao, a barbarous people of what is now northwestern Yun-nan, asked to become a vassal of the Chinese empire, undoubtedly refers to this event.⁴² Briggs points out that E.H. Parker paid a great deal of attention to this legendary kingdom, which he calls Ai-Lao.⁴³ It may be noted that the name Ngai-Lao, or Ai-Lao, is found all over the map of northeastern Indo-China, even to Central Annam; but whether the Ngai-Lao who founded Nan-Chao had any special relationship with the Lao or Laotians, of the Nam Hou, who founded the Laotian principalities on the Mekong, is not definitely known. These two groups came from opposite corners of the kingdom of Nan-Chao and according to the Ngai-Lao legend they are two different branches of the same stock.⁴⁴

After eighteen years from the date of their first submission to China the Ngai-Lao king Liu-mao sent his son in A.D. 69 at the head of his tribesmen to make his submission again to the Chinese Emperor, Haïen Tsung, who is famous in history as Ming Ti (A.D. 57-75) and who first introduced Buddhism in China.⁴⁵ The total population represented by

42 Ma Touan-lin : Ethnographie des peuples etrangeres a la Chine ... Meridionale, (Paris, 1883), p. 175 referred to by Briggs in JAOS, vol. 69, 1949, p. 63.

43 E.H. Parker, "The early Laos in China", China Review, 19, 72-106 and "The old Tai, or Shan, empire of Western Yunnan", OR, 20, 337.

44 JAOS, vol. 69, 1949, p. 63.

45 According to Latourette and many other modern writers Buddhism had already entered China before Ming-Ti. - Latourette : op.cit., p. 129.

the Ngai-Lao Delegation that went to submit to the Emperor, is put at 553,716 in 51,390 families with 77 headmen called Princes. According to Chinese records they lived at a distance of 7000 li south-west of Lu-Yang, the imperial capital of China near modern Honan-Fu under the Later or Eastern Han Dynasty (25-221), called in Chinese Tung Han or Hou Han.

These submissions must have affected only a section of the Tai without any great harm to the compact area of the Tai and the Tai kingdoms farther south over which the Chinese could scarcely have imposed their suzerainty. Yet the above submissions of the Ngai-Lao meant a great extension of the Chinese dominions to the south-west of the Empire. Following upon their victory, the Chinese made a further advance which brought their frontier beyond the Lan-tsang (Mekong) river and opened up communications with Burma and the West. This acquisition of new territory necessitated the creation of the Yung-Ch'ang prefecture (Chan) in western Yun-nan. This prefecture included only two new districts viz., the small kingdom of Ngai-Lao and Po-nan, to which were added six districts that had formed the western part of I-chou and had been governed by the Tu-Wei of that division appointed in A.D. 67 with his residence at Sui-t'ang. As mentioned in the Han Han chih ("supplement to the Han chih") the names of the six districts were Fu-wei, Sui-t'ang, Pi-su, Yeh-yu, Yeh-lung and Yun-nan (Yun-nan-Fu?). Sainson's map shows a Yun-nan hsien (district) south-east of Ta-li Lake. The district Ngai-Lao, it is believed, was given that name by the Ngai-Lao. It was

originally a kingdom under the Lao kings.⁴⁶ Since the prefecture of Yung-ch'ang extended westwards beyond the Mekong, and Po-nan is said to be east of it, the district of Ngai-Lao was, in all probability, situated on the west of that river in the neighbourhood of Yung-Ch'ang-fu.

Ngai-Lao was one of the SIX CHAOS or kingdoms of western Yun-nan and was called by the Chinese Jung-Chow (Yun-chao ?) or Shen-to-kuo. Jung-Chow was probably Jen Kue already mentioned in connection with Asoka's line of rulers in Yun-nan. Ngai-Lao was the name given to the kingdom by the 'barbarians' who ruled it. Five of these kingdoms including Ngai-Lao were Tai and the sixth one, called Na-khi with its capital at Li Chiang, was Tibeto - Burman. It is stated in Chinese records that in A.D. 649 Chang-le-chin, king of Ngai-Lao, abdicated the throne in favour of a Tai Prince named Meng-Hsi-nu-lo, a member of the Meng family of the Ngai-Lao (Tai) race. Hsi-nu-lo's kingdom was south of the other five kingdoms and extended from Yung-Ch'ang-fu to Yao-chew.⁴⁷ Thus the general position and extent of the Ngai-Lao kingdom is clear from the above accounts. Nan-Chao empire developed from this originally small Chao or kingdom of Ngai-Lao and the Meng family ruled over it for 170 years.⁴⁸ Po-nan is said to have "the western mountains 30 li high. Having crossed them you get to the Lan-tsang Shui". (Me-kong).⁴⁹

46 Hou han shu, ch. 33, f. 2 recto.

47 "The History of the Thai in Yunnan" by M. Carthew in JSS, July, 1952, pp. 7, 15 ; also L. Hoontrakul : op.cit., pp. B., 91.

48 L. Hoontrakul : op.cit., p. 95.

49 The Hua Yang Kuo Chih, vide JBRB, vol. xiv,

Cheng Shun was possibly the first prefect of Yung-Ch'ang to whom must be ascribed the progress and China's popularity in the prefecture. By a treaty with the Ngai-Lao community he levied on all male persons a nominal per capita annual ^{tribute} ~~tax~~ consisting of "a measure of salt and two cloth garments, with a hole for the head to go through". Rev. Cochrane draws our notice to such garments being worn to this day by the wild Karen tribes of Burma. It was the constructive genius of this Chinese officer that brought peace and political stability to this border territory of the farflung empire of China.

But in A.D. 76,⁵⁰ after his death, the Ngai-Lao, led by their General King Lei-Lao, rebelled and attacked the neighbouring districts of Sui-t'ang and Po-nan. The Chinese authorities were, however, quick enough to put down the rebellion the very next year, the Ngai-Lao king being killed in the battle. This defeat caused a mass migration of the Ngai-Lao to the Northern Shan States of Burma. A section of them, being oppressed by the Chinese, went towards Tong-king.⁵¹ But the Ngai-Lao did not take long to recover from this blow and re-unite, in face of constant threats from the Empire, to work up and bring into being the powerful empire of Nan-Chao. In the mean time, for about a century, after the defeat of the Ngai-Lao rebels, the southern frontier remained undisturbed facilitating visits of foreign embassies to China

50 A.D. 78 according T. de Lacouperie : op.cit., p. lli.

51 T. de Lacouperie : op.cit., pl liii. ; Eric Seidenfaden in Credner's Monograph on Yun-nan, p. 18.

across it. Thus the Tun-jen-i (A.D. 94), the Tan (A.D. 97), the Lu-lei pigmies (A.D. 107) and the Tan once more (A.D. 121) sent their embassies, who passed through this Ngai-Lao country to the Chinese court.⁵² The road for communication with distant countries was thus opened for the first time via Lit. Po-nan and across the Lan-tsang (Me-kong) river. A song, that was current, describes this outlet to the world abroad from China thus : "The power of the Han is broad. It opens the door to those who are not yet guests. We cross Po-nan : pass the Lan-ford : cross the Lan-tsang : for the benefit of others".⁵³

The Hsi Yang Kuo Chih says that west of Po-nan district is a mountain 30 li high and after passing it one has to cross the Lan-tsang river.

Except for a gap in the early period a long line of Ngai-Lao rulers is now available. The Ngai-Lao Chuan (i.e. "Record of the Ngai-Lao") says that the names of Chiu-lung's successors, generation by generation, can not be numbered up to the time of one called Chin-Kao, but thenceforth they are recorded. Thus "on the death of Chin-Kao, his son Hsi succeeded him. On the death of Hsi, his son Chien-fei succeeded him. On the death of Chien-fei, his son Ngai-Lao succeeded him. On the death of Ngai-Lao, his son Sang-ngou succeeded him. On the death of Sang-ngou, his son Liu-cheng succeeded him. On the death of Liu-cheng, his son Liu-mao succeeded him. On the death of Liu-mao, his son Hu-li succeeded him". Still there is a lacuna between Hu-li and Hsien-li of the first century

⁵² JIES, vol. xiv, Part II, p. 108.

⁵³ Ibid, p. 115.

A.D. But that the race, with its various sections under various tribal names, had been existing from very early times is beyond dispute. They had spread all over that part of the country and formed settlements under their chiefs or 'kings' in localities, separated by mountain gorges and gullies, and also in secluded areas and barren tracts beyond the frontier, cut off by deep mountain streams. Though more or less isolated yet they grew powerful in Yun-nan and Lower Sze-Chuan. But the formidable impact of the expanding Chinese Empire caused these peoples to migrate to northern Burma, French Indo-China and Siam and those that remained behind in subjection to the Empire were restless looking out for opportunities to assert their independence and strive to regain their lost territories. Hsien-li's action and Lei-Lao's organized revolt against the Chinese rule are probably only two out of many such historical instances in point as yet known to us. In fact, the whole area comprising Yun-nan and a large part of Sze-chuan was in a state of unrest resulting in intervals of local independence for the Tai and other peoples. Such independence enabled them to consolidate their power to meet fresh dangers from the Empire.

There were also troubles in the south-eastern frontier of the Empire. The peoples of the coastal provinces and Annam, which had been annexed by Shih-Wang-Ti and placed under the administrative system of the Ch'in, took advantage of the weaknesses of the Empire after the death of Shih-Wang-Ti and succeeded in overthrowing the Chinese Yoke and restoring the independence of their own territories. It has been mentioned how cruelly the Tai had been dislodged by the Chinese from

Central and Southern China - from Ch'u, Lo, Shu and even Yun-nan. A considerable section of these Tai migrated, in desperation, to the south-eastern wilds and hills. These Tai must have played a significant part in this drive for liberation from the Chinese yoke on the death of the first Emperor Shih-Wang-Ti. Their freedom, however, did not last long. Being divided under local rival chiefs, they became weak and passed into the hands of China once again under Han Wu-Ti (140-86 B.C.) about 108 B.C. when Nan Yueh, the largest of these kingdoms in the south, was conquered and annexed by the Han.

Weaknesses of the imperial authority soon after Shih-Wang-Ti's death became manifest when ruthless measures were taken against the most trusted advisers and generals by Ur-Sze-Wang-Ti, "the Second Generation Emperor" (209-207 b.c.),⁵⁴ at the instigation of an influential eunuch, named Chao Kao. The Emperor's action gave rise to widespread rebellion which brought about rapid downfall of the Ch'in dynasty. It afforded an opportunity to the discontented 'southern barbarians' to overthrow the Ch'in suzerainty which Shih-Wang-Ti had imposed from Annam to the Burmese border. The Tai, who were the most numerous and dominant element in Yun-nan, Sze-chuan and Kwei-chow, had always cherished the ambition to restore their ancestral sovereignty over as much of Central China as could be wrested from the Chinese. As such, whenever any opportunity arose for striking

⁵⁴ Shih-Wang-Ti wished that his own descendants should rule the Empire for thousands of years and that his successors should be named as Second Generation (Skt. Purusa), Third Generation Emperors etc. - Hoonthakul, op.cit., p. 56

a blow against the Chinese overlordship, the Tai vassal chiefs did never fail to avail themselves of it. Thus most of the Tai States of the south asserted their independence at the decline of Shih-Wang-Ti's dynasty. These had to be reconquered by the Han rulers towards the last decades of the second century B.C., one of the objects being to open and control the trade routes to India via Burma.

In 100 B.C. Han-Wu-Ti sent an expedition to Tien⁵⁵ (Yun-nan-fu), a Tai kingdom. The outcome of the expedition was that the king of Tien became an ally of China and helped her to suppress the K'un-ming⁵⁶ tribe. In about 108 B.C. Han-Wu-Ti reannexed the south-eastern part of the former Ch'in Empire. Under him the Empire extended far and wide in the south and comprised the Tai provinces of Kwang-tung, Kwang-si, Yun-nan, Kwei-chow, Tongking, Hainan and the north-eastern part of French Indo-China. Such extension was possible due to the superiority of the Han army, which had been organized on a new plan with such major changes as the replacement of the old cumbersome war chariot by a mobile cavalry supported by infantry. But internally the country was so heavily drained of its wealth and the people so mercilessly taxed by Han-Wu-Ti for his

⁵⁵ Mr. E.H. Parker notes that Tien is a name still applied to Yun-nan in the literary style. In the last part of the Chou period a Chou general named Chuan Chao created this earlier kingdom in eastern Yun-nan calling it Tien Kuo. Sir George Scott says that during Wu-Ti's reign the king of Tien was a Shan (Tai). His capital was at Peh-ngai and this place remained an important Shan centre till after eight-hundred years.

⁵⁶ The name K'un-ming is still applied to a lake near Yun-nan-fu - GUBSS, I.I. pp. 260-61.

ambitious wars of conquest that at length the whole country bristled up with rebellions which were only suppressed by appalling slaughter.⁵⁷

When after about two hundred years the Later Han finally collapsed, the Empire broke up into three kingdoms (San Kuo : A.D. 221-265) in A.D. 221. In Sze-chuan one Liu-Pei, a descendant of the Han, declared himself Emperor, whose dynasty thenceforth became known as the Minor or Shu Han, Shu being the name of the State over which he had ruled. Liu-Pei was the uncle of Emperor Hien-Ti and, as such, proclaimed himself as the lawful heir to the throne of the Han. He called himself Chao-Lieh-Ti and ruled over the south-western division comprising Sze-chuan, Yun-nan and Kwei-chow, predominantly a Tai area, with his capital established at Cheng-tu. He appointed as his minister Chu-Ko-Liang or Kun-Ming, a great statesman and General who came from Shantung. Chu-Ko-Liang served him faithfully and did much to improve the country. The three kingdoms - Wei in the north, Woo in the east and Shu in the west - contended for the Imperial crown, as none of their rulers was recognized by the others as superior.

Chu-Ko-Liang (A.D. 181-234) was a great historical figure of the third century A.D. whose name has become memorable to this day among the south-west 'barbarians' and whose life has gathered round it a whole cycle of legends. It was

⁵⁷ Soothill : op. cit., pp. 26-28 ; Latourette : op. cit., pp. 103-108.

Chu-Ko-Liang, who helped Liu Pei to become King of Shu (Szechuan) and also restored order in the barbarian south by subduing the border tribes. In this campaign he is said to have entered Burma and invaded her. This is mentioned in a passage contained in a reference to Pagan in the Chu fan chih which says : "There is in this country a temple dedicated to the marquis Chu-Ko-Liang who is said to have led an expedition to the heart of Burma somewhere about A.D. 225.⁵⁸ Further many frontier towns and ramparts in modern Burma are to this day called after Chu-Ko-Liang. In the Museum at Yun-nan-fu there is a drum attributed to him.⁵⁹ with the following note by Georges Cordier : "Chu-Ko-Liang ... was appointed Governor of I-Chou ... plants native to China ... According to tradition, bronze-drums ... approach".

Liu Pei died in A.D. 223 and was succeeded by his son Hou-Ti (or Hou-Chu). In A.D. 225 Hou-Ti attacked Yun-nan. He stopped at Peh-ngai (Pai-ngat) in the neighbourhood of Tien (Yun-nan-fu) and found reigning there Prince Lu-yu-na of the Tai (Shan) royal family and descendant of Prince Jen-Kuo (122-117 B.C.) in the eighteenth generation.⁶⁰ It was the first Chinese invasion of the hilly country of Yun-nan during the reign of the Han dynasty. Yun-nan-fu, the provincial capital of Yun-nan, was given the new name of Kun-ming by Young China after the name of the leader of the Chinese army that invaded Yun-nan in that year.⁶¹

⁵⁸ Giles : A Chinese Bibliographical Dictionary, p. 180 ; Chau Ju-Kua, pp. 53-9, n 3., as quoted in JPRS, vol. xiv, Part II, p. 93.

⁵⁹ See BEFE-O, 1915, No. 3, p. 37.

⁶⁰ JSS, vol. XL, Pt. I, July, 1952, p.7.

⁶¹ Gradner on cit. ...

In the third year of Hou-Ti's reign Meng-Huo, a Tai Prince of the Marn country⁶² invaded southern Yun-nan. This invasion was the part of a great rebellion against China in which Yang-Kai, the Prefect of Ch'ien-sing⁶³ (present Kun-ming ?), Intendant Chu-pae and officer Kao-tang joined hands with Meng-huo and all acted in concert. Prefects of Yueh-sui in southern Sze-chuan and Yang-ko (present Kwei-yang) in western Kwei-chow also made common cause with the rebels. But the Prefect of Yang-ch'ang⁶⁴ remained loyal to the Chinese Emperor and used all his strength to defend his province. The city of Ta-li was occupied by the rebel leader Meng-huo. On receipt of information from the Resident at Ta-li about this widespread rebellion against China, Emperor Hou-Ti⁶⁵ sent Chu-Ko-Liang, his minister for the western Empire, from Cheng-Tu with a powerful force of 500,000 soldiers for quelling the rebellion. Against this imperial force the rebel leaders brought together four divisions, each of 50,000 men.

General Chu-Ko-Liang marched down to Chi-sing-kuan, an important strategic point in north-west Kwei-Chow and used it as the main base of operations for his army. Starting from there he proceeded to cut off the lines of communication from

⁶² Marn means Burman.

⁶³ According to L. Hoontrakul's researches Chien-Ning or I-chou district, the present Kun-ming in the centre of Yun-nan, *op.cit.*, p. 82.

⁶⁴ Yang-ch'ang, present Pao-Shan in south-western Yun-nan which was formerly called Ai-Lao country.

⁶⁵ Mentioned as Ch'ien-hsin in the "History of the Southern Princes". vide "The History of the Thai in Yun-nan", *JSS*, vol. XL, Pt. I, July, 1952, p.8.

the three provinces in control of the rebels and threatened them with dire consequences unless their Prefects surrendered. At the same time he succeeded in winning over to his side the Prefect of Yueh-sui. He then launched his attack on the rebel leaders, defeated their armies and killed Yang-kai. After this defeat of his allied forces Prince Meng Huo (also Meng Kuo) who had already taken Ta-li and installed himself as its ruler, was left alone to face the formidable imperial army led by the military genius and foremost strategist Chu-Ko-Liang. Yet he was determined to resist the Chinese. The clever Chu-Ko-Liang, instead of making a direct attack on Ta-li, used a few bronze drums to scare away Meng Huo from within the fortifications of the city without a battle. The plan succeeded and Meng Huo, being alarmed, left the city for the Lu-Sui (the river Salween). On the banks of the Lu-Sui both the armies met and fought a number of epic battles, a narrative of which is found in Chinese literature.

It is said that during this historic campaign Chu-Ko-Liang captured Meng Huo for six times, not by defeating him in the battle-field but by stratagem, and every time released him magnanimously hoping to see him voluntarily submit to the imperial authority ; but all such gestures were of no effect. In the first phase of the war, captures were on the left (east) bank of the Lu-Sui to the north-west of Yung-Ch'ang-fu, where most of the engagements took place. On being released from captivity for the sixth time, Meng-Huo found his attempts to resist the Chinese general from this side of the river futile.

He therefore retreated to the opposite bank and used the river as his defence against any further advance of the Marquis.

But the Marquis managed, with great difficulty, to cross the river with his troops by means of an iron-chained bridge constructed by him. At this place many of his troops died of malaria as the Salween is one of the worst mosquito-breeding rivers in South-east Asia. Chu-Ko-Liang then entered Upper Burma in pursuit of Meng-huo and succeeded in capturing him for the seventh time. It is said that Chu-Ko-Liang could penetrate deep into the Miao or Burman country with the help of a map presented to him during this campaign by the sub-Prefect of Yung-Ch'ang. He returned to the head quarters at Yung-Ch'ang with the captive prince by the same route and reached the Lu-Sui in the ninth month while the river was in flood. This time he had to decide finally whether he should allow the same generosity as before to this obstinate prince and let him off or treat him as an enemy and take action accordingly. In handling this most difficult but, at the same time, most delicate question of Chinese frontier policy, he was, on this occasion, guided by General Mah-tse, who had just arrived from the Imperial Court with despatches and presents. Mah-tse gave his wise advice to Chu-Ko-Liang in these words :-

"Though I may be prejudiced in my opinion, nevertheless, think over my words. These Tai are a self-confident and lawless race ; the distant position of their country from ours, the high mountains, the dangerous roads, only encourage their rebellious ideas. If you crush them to-day, then tomorrow they will rally and rebel again. Doubtless, your army will

be able to crush them again, but to keep them in permanent subjection and preserve order you would have to keep a large standing army in the country ; and then, as soon as you removed it rebellion would at once recur. I strongly advise you to contend with their minds rather than with their bodies or their cities. First govern their hearts and then you will without trouble be able to govern their bodies and their cities. Conquest of their reason is all important and their loyalty will follow after it".⁶⁶

Marquis Chu-Ko-Liang then replied : "You see through my body (literally, into my most intimate thoughts). I agree with you".⁶⁷ Chinese classical scholars affirm that Marquis Chu-Ko-Liang was one of the finest statesmen and military strategists ever produced in China, whose opinion about the Tai was based upon intimate personal knowledge of the characteristics of the race.

While in detention, Prince Meng Huo was once sitting in a despondent mood for his defeat. Seeing this his wife Chu-Yong remonstrated with him for his mental breakdown and asked him to give her the command of the army. Prince Meng-huo reluctantly granted it. The Princess at once prepared herself for the fight and assumed the command of a force of one hundred of his bravest officers and five thousand of his best troops and sallied forth on horseback to meet the enemy.

⁶⁶ "The History of the Thai in Yun-nan" in JSS, vol. XL, Pt. I, 1952, p.9.

⁶⁷ Ibid, p.9.

She was an expert in throwing knives and carried to the battle-field five sharp knives strapped in a case on her back and a long lance in her right hand. The Chinese General Chang-in was surprised to see a woman leading the Tai troops. In the battle that took place between the two armies the Chinese were worsted and Chu-Yong overpowered and captured the two Chinese generals, Chang-in and Ma-chong, who had been sent against her. The marvellous martial qualities and faultless fighting tactics of the Tai Princess evoked profound admiration even from the enemy camp. She was, however, trapped by General Wei in a subsequent battle and presented to the Marquis. The Marquis was so charmed and moved to see the handsome and gallant lady that he immediately released her from captivity and, after dispelling her fears, entertained the royal couple with a sumptuous feast. Next day the Prince was formally set free by the Marquis.

Overwhelmed with gratitude Meng-kuo burst into tears and said : "seven times now have I been mercifully released by my captor. Surely the like of this has never been known in history. I should be a most wicked and ungrateful man if I ever rebel again".⁶⁸ On his submission, he was reinstated by the Marquis as a hereditary ruler of his former kingdom after a peace agreement, apparently under Chinese suzerainty.

It may be particularly noted that in this campaign there is mention of the use of gun-powder and cannon by the

⁶⁸ JSE, vol. XL, Pt. I, 1952, ibid., pp. 8-11.

Chinese. The account of the war also describes the use of a small cannon which fired many balls simultaneously. It is this superiority in arms that gave Chu-Ko-Liang a great technical advantage over the Tai rebels.⁶⁹

Meng-huo is also mentioned as prince of Tien.⁷⁰

This and the other geographical descriptions in the narrative of the war, which was fought for five months,⁷¹ indicate that the principality of Tien comprised a part of the present Yun-nan, particularly the south-western part of it, and a part of north-eastern Burma with the Salween at the China-Burma frontier. That frontier appears to have remained so till Kublai Khan's conquest of Yun-nan, for the frontier battle of Nga-saunggyan (1277) between the armies of the king of Mien (Burma) at Pagan and Kublai Khan was fought near Vochang (Yung-ch'ang-fu) in the neighbourhood of the Salween river.⁷² Chu-Ko-Liang's invasion of Burma is connected with the early irruption of

⁶⁹ There was a great destruction of Meng-huo's forces, led by his General Prince Wu, in a ravine. The Chinese at this place threw flaming torches from the sides of the ravine when General Wu's troops reached it. The oiled rush armour of Prince Wu's troops soon caught fire and the flames spread rapidly. The lighted torches set fire to trains of gunpowder laid in bamboo poles; and these exploding, ignited buried cannon which fired in all directions. Soon the whole ravine was full of flames and smoke and that day Prince Wu and his whole army perished. Further, 'the cannon were each composed of nine small ones, bound together with strips of brass and were fired by trains of gunpowder'. Marquis Chu-Ko-Liang watched the carnage and wept with sorrow at the enormous sacrifice of life. - JSS, vol. XL, Pt. I, 1952, p. 14.

⁷⁰ vide "The History of the Thai in Yunnan" in JSS, vol. XL, Pt. I, 1952, p. 9. From the references to Tien it appears that writers sometimes refer by that name to the whole of the modern province of Yun-nan with certain adjacent territories.

⁷¹ vide L. Hoontrakul : op. cit., p. 86.

⁷² L. Hoontrakul : op. cit., see map opposite p. 86 ; Hall : Burma, (Hutchinson, London, 1950), p. 26 ; Konroff : The Travels of Marco Polo. The Modern Library, New York, 1926, pp.

Tarops and Tarets, from the north-east of Burma, who left their mark at old Pagan. Chu-Ko-Liang also erected an iron pillar in Mitu, 30 li from Heng-ai in commemoration of his victories. This pillar was destroyed in A.D. 870, but later one Prince Shi-long caused a copy of it to be cast. This later column is still preserved in the Tieh-en-mai village of Heng-ai.⁷³ Chu-Ko-Liang is not only noted for his wonderful ideas of strategy, but also for the inventions of military machines.

In spite of personal bravery and great statesmanship of Chu-Ko-Liang, Shu was the first of the three kingdoms to disappear. Then there followed a period of unstable government till at last the Eastern Chin came into power. The Chinese suzerainty over the territories of the turbulent south during this period was no better than a mere formality. Not being contented with this State of affairs, the ambitious Tai princes, with all their pride and traditions of a great ruling race in China, sought to unite and reconstruct the separate petty States into a powerful consolidated kingdom capable of challenging their northern colossus. The Tai or Lo or Lao people, who made southwestern Yun-nan their last stronghold and home, suffered terribly from the ravages of the war with the Shu Han. As a result, large numbers of these people left for the southern countries - Burma, Laos and Siam - as refugees. But a considerable section grimly stuck to their native land and faced all the horrors of the war with silent resistance to the Imperialists. It was these people, who in their uncompromising attitude towards the Chinese, organized the Nan-Chao kingdom during a period of China's own disintegration and misfortune.

CHAPTER III

RISE AND FALL OF THE NAN-CHAO EMPIRE

From very early times Yun-nan was called by the Chinese 'the Land of the Hsi-nan', meaning thereby the land of the 'southern barbarians', and its inhabitants were contemptuously referred to as 'ungovernable vermin'. Rejecting the very high antiquity of the term Hsi-nan, about 2200 B.C., as shown in some Chinese records of a much later date, we may safely assume that for many centuries before Christ the tribes of the south, the Tai in particular, were called Hsi-nan by the Chinese. At a later date, about 225 B.C., the Chinese used to refer to them as P'u-jen dropping the earlier term meaning 'vermin', but they always regarded them as 'ungovernable'. Other names for them were Tien-jen (men of Tien or Yun-nan) and later Lu-chao (inhabitants of Nan-Chao).¹ According to Chiu-t'ang-Shu, "formerly their chiefs were six; hence their name Lu-chao."² Yun-nan, too, was known by many different names in different periods, such as Nan-Chao, Hao-t'o, Lung-Wei ("Dragon's tail"), Chu-mieh, and Yang-chien.³ Under the ancient Chou dynasty (c. 1122-255 B.C.) Yun-nan was called Shan-tsan. Only the name Shan-tsan is known without any account of its rulers.

1 M. Carthew : ibid., in JSS, vol. XL, Pt. I, 1952, p. 3.

2 JRSB, vol. XIV, Pt. II, p. 108.

3 Ibid., p. 108.

In the last part of the Chou period, somewhere between 280 and 255 B.C., the Emperor sent an expedition to the south under General Chuan Chao for the conquest of Sze-chuan and for exploring the regions along the river Yang-tse-kiang. The General marched upto the shores of the Yun-nan Lake (Tien Chih) in eastern Yun-nan and then wanted to return. But his road had been blocked by troops engaged in a war at the time between two neighbouring States. He, therefore, stopped and proclaimed himself king of the conquered territories calling it Tien Kuo (kingdom of Tien). The dynasty he thus founded is known as Tien dynasty. Western Yun-nan, with Tali as capital, was then ruled by kings having legendary connection with India.

To the Chinese "Nan-Chao barbarians were originally a sort of Wu Man ('Black Barbarians') tribe. These barbarians call their king Chao. They claim to be descendants of the Ngai-Lao. For generations they dwelt in Meng-She-Chou and were chieftains there".⁴ "Black Barbarians" were so called, as pointed out by Rev. Cochrane, because of the Tai habit of wearing black garments.⁵ The Ahoms had the same habit in the earlier period of their rule in Assam.⁶ It has no reference to their complexion which is definitely fair everywhere. Meng-She-Chao was one of the six small kingdoms or Chao of Yun-nan

⁴ The Chiu t'ang shu as translated in JBRS, vol. XIV, Pt. II, p. 107.

⁵ Milne and Cochrane : *op.cit.*, p. 12.

⁶ During Suhumpha's rule (1497-1539), the people of Gaur were struck to see the terrible looking black-dressed Ahoms on the bank of the Karatoya - Assam Buranji, ed. by S.K. Bhuyan, 1945, Shillong. p.23.

and was the southernmost of these kingdoms.⁷ Meng-She was, according to Chia Tan's itinerary, the original Nan-Chao ("the Chao on the south"). Pelliot says that it was on the site of the present village of Ku-Ch'eng, 15 li north of Meng-hue.⁸ Parker says that Meng-She was the ancient seat of the Meng family of Nan-Chao rulers. Scott believes that Meng-she is the modern Mangshih, called by the Shans Mong Hkawn.⁹ Nan-Chao represented the southernmost limit in the direction of Burma reached by the Sino-Tai cultural influence.

From A.D. 230 until A.D. 649 western Yun-nan remained divided into six separate States, known in history as "the Six Kingdoms of Nan-Chao", governed by their hereditary princes called "Chaos". They were under Chinese suzerainty. In A.D. 649 the king of Ai-Lao, Chiang-le-chin, abdicated in favour of Prince Meng-Si-nu-lo, a member of the Meng (Mung or Tai) family.¹⁰ He was the most powerful of the six Chaos or Princes and his kingdom was called Meng-She. At that time eastern Yun-nan was a Chinese territory under a Prefect of the Chang family whose head-quarters were at Chien-ning or I-Chou (the present Kun-ming city). Prince Si-nu-lo married a daughter of the Prefect. The Chinese annals say that in A.D. 650 the Tai rebelled and defeated the Chinese.¹¹ This was

7 L.Hoontrakul : op.cit., p.91 ; JSS , vol.XL, Pt.I, 1952, p. 15.

8 BEFE-O, 1904, p.369, n.2 ; vide JBRS, vol.XIV, Pt. II, p. 108.

9 GUBSS, 1.1, p.264.

10 JSS, vol.XL, Pt.I, 1952, p. 15.

11 Sarasas : op.cit., p.11.

probably the triumph of Si-nu-lo in his process of consolidating the Tai power by uniting the petty principalities of Western Yun-nan.

He was succeeded in A.D. 674 by his son Lo-Sing-Yen, who reigned for about thirty-eight years without any notable event. His son Sing-lo-pi came to the throne in A.D. 712. He rendered very important services to the T'ang Emperor, Yuan-Chung, for which the latter was pleased to invest him with a territory in southern Sze-Chuan and to confer upon him the princely rank of Tai-Ting-Wang. In the history of the "six kingdoms of Nan-Chao" the most revolutionary event was the rise of a single powerful kingdom by the unification of all the six separate kingdoms in A.D. 738. The author of that historic achievement was Meng-Kui-Yi, son of the Tai-Ting-Wang Sing-lo-pi. He assumed the name of Pi-lo-ko and succeeded to his father's throne in A.D. 728 at the age of thirty-one. He was an ambitious prince who wanted to unify under him the six kingdoms into one ^{by} means fair or foul. But he apprehended that the suzerain power might intervene in the event of a major conflict arising in an attempt to accomplish it. He therefore secretly obtained the co-operation of a high Chinese official named Wong, who was stationed at Ch'ien-C'wan-fu in Sze-Chuan, in the matter. He seems to have suggested to the Emperor through this official how it would be of greater advantage to the Imperial Government to have to deal with only one ruler instead of six in that remote part of the empire and how one ruler over the whole territory would maintain peace better than

several rival princes. The Emperor must have appreciated the idea as he gave his sanction for the proposed unification of the country. It is not known, however, what means he had suggested in his approach to the Emperor to secure that end.

Prince Pi-lo-ko then planned a coup d'etat. He invited his five royal neighbours with their sons to join him at Meng-hua (Meng-wha-ting) on the 24th day of the 6th Moon of the year A.D. 731 in offering sacrifices to the spirits of their ancestors and to participate in the sacrificial feast. But the invitations aroused suspicion in the minds of some of the Princes. Prince Li-chiang, a Na-khi, refused the invitation. Prince U-tsen of Ten-C'wan-chew accepted the invitation after a good deal of hesitation. His wife Tsi-Shan, a woman of extraordinary beauty and intelligence, suspected evil intention on the part of the host and therefore requested her husband to put on his sword-proof amulet as a precaution against any act of treachery while going to attend the function. The function was deliberately held in a large hall made of inflammable pitch pine. The Princes and their sons met and performed the sacrifices. When the rituals were over the royal guests were all entertained with a feast in the hall and were made dead drunk. After dark, while the Princes were still in that condition, Pi-lo-ko put armed guards all around the compound and set fire to the hall. Four of the Princes and their sons perished in the flames. The fifth Prince was later subdued.

Having thus eliminated the Princes and their sons by a single stroke of policy he quickly proceeded to annex

their kingdoms and also to take into his harem the royal widows except Tsi-Shan, who refused to submit. He then sent troops to capture her, but she escaped the indignity by swallowing poison. The place, where she committed suicide, is now called Ten-rien-cen, which is 20 li north-east of Ten-c'wan-chew. G.W. Clark informs us that both these historic events are even to-day celebrated annually by the local people. On the 24th day of the 6th Moon each year the people in the district round Ta-li celebrate what is known as "He-pa-chieh" or Firebrand Feast in commemoration of the great tragedy of the Princes.

The Tai prince Pi-lo-ko of Meng-She may thus be called the founder of what later became known in history as the kingdom of Nan-Chao. The combined territory, over which Pi-lo-ko became the unrivalled monarch, was first called Ta-meng-kuo (Great Mung-Kingdom) in A.D. 738. The name Ta-meng-kuo was changed into Nan-Chao-kuo (kingdom of Nan-Chao) in A.D. 794 when Emperor Teh-Chung of the T'ang dynasty conferred upon Yi-men-sin, son and successor of Ko-lo-feng, the title of Nan-Chao-Wang (Emperor of Nan-Chao). Pi-lo-ko transferred his capital from Meng-She to the rich and well-protected plains of Ta-li and built it at Tai-Ho-Tsheng,¹² 3 Kilometres

¹² 'Tsheng' is said to be Chinese translation of the Tai word Tshiang (Chieng), which means a fortified town. Now with the decay of this old capital the place is called Tai-Ho-Tsun-Tsun meaning in Chinese a village.

south of Ta-li, between the shores of Erh Hai and the Tien Tshang Shan range.¹³ His main consideration in selecting Ta-li was its great strategic value. In A.D. 739 some of the Man-tsi tribes rebelled but Prince Pi-lo-ko soon reduced them to submission. With some of these tribesmen he visited the Imperial capital. Emperor K'ai uien (?) or probably Hsuan Tsung of the T'ang dynasty, who ruled from A.D. 713 to 755, "received him very graciously, bestowed high titles upon him, gave him many presents, and requested him to build many cities in his kingdom". After returning from the Chinese capital Pi-lo-ko used his Man-tsi prisoners to build the city of Tai-Ho. He also built a number of other cities including Ta-li-fu and Hsia and Shan Kwans, calling them Long-tow and Leng-wi, that is, the dragon's head and tail. In A.D. 740 two cities of his kingdom Ch'ien-c'wan-lau-kong and Yung-chang-fu fell into the hands of a rebel leader named Meu-Chao, but Pi-lo-ko crushed the rebellion and recaptured the cities.

In A.D. 745, during the reign of the sixth T'ang Emperor, Ming-Ti, Pi-lo-ko entered into a new treaty with China. This second treaty, which was perhaps necessitated by the expiry or violation of the old one, guaranteed security of Nen-Chao on the Chinese side. Pi-lo-ko thus became free to deal with the troublesome Tibetans. He then launched a war on Tibet and succeeded in seizing several cities.

Though for Pi-lo-ko end seems to justify the means and he set such an example by committing the dastardly act of

13 Credner : ibid, p.5.

assassinating the princes of the neighbouring States and annexing their territories, either at the instigation or connivance of the Emperor, yet he proved to be a great builder and a great king by accomplishing the unification of the hitherto weak and petty States within a very brief space of time. It seems he acted with a vision and preferred to make a short cut to its realization. His great object was undoubtedly to consolidate the Tai power at the Dragon's tail by welding together the small rival kingdoms and the opportunity for this task he created by the policy of promoting friendship with China. Pi-lo-ko's achievement created a great impression on the mind of the Emperor, who was then pleased to appoint Pi-lo-ko's son as a general of the imperial army for the southern defence with head-quarters at Meng-hua.

The unification of Nan-Chao, then called Ta-Meng-Kuo, (The Great Mung Kingdom) under Pi-lo-ko was the first great step towards the development of that kingdom into a rival empire of China. The administrative system of the kingdom, as at the time of Pi-lo-ko's death, reached a high degree of efficiency, so much so that it was supposed to be better organized with its numerous departments than any that contemporary Europe had. The king had a Council of eight Ministers to manage the civil and military affairs of the State. Legislation was one of the functions of the Ministers. For directing and supervising the works of the various departments there were nine Executive Officers, a President over the mandarins, an officer for the Census, Military Instructors, Judges, Commissioners of Works and of the Board of Trade, three officers

in charge of the government granaries, one Superintendent of Horses, One Superintendent of Cattle, a Commander-in-Chief, a Commissariat Officer and eight Prefects ; and two Brigadier-Generals, one stationed at Hwa-li-ch'ee Si-l'wein and the other at Tong-hai-hsien. There were thirty-five military officers in command of troops, stationed at various strategic centres east of Ta-li, but only two such officers west of the city. Provisions were made for rewarding persons for acts of bravery and rendering distinguished services to the State. Rewards were generally gifts of gorgeous clothes. Thus the whole system was based upon well-developed principles of government. ¹⁴

Such division of responsibility and the task of co-ordination of the affairs of so many departments are themselves a great practical limitation upon the royal power. To be used to such a system itself virtually transforms an absolute monarchy into a limited one. In fact, the Tai monarchy of Nan-Chao was based on an unwritten principle of checks and balances and the king was often elected by the subjects. Administrative features, such as these, reflect an enlightened idea of government as distinguished from the rule of the tribal chieftains. There is no evidence to show that the king ever claimed to rule by divine right. In the later period, however, the Nan-Chao rulers professed Buddhism and under the influence of that religion the legend grew that the reigning dynasty of the kingdom was descended from Asoka.

The relation between Imperial China and Nan-Chao was

one of freindship between two great powers with the difference that the latter had to acknowledge, as a formality, the suzerainty of the former. The government of Nan-Chao was, on that account, not a subordinate branch of the government of China. The relations of the other non-Chinese southern States to the Empire were also more or less the same. These southern rulers used to pay friendly visits to the Imperial Court in recognition of the latter's superior dignity and receive from the Emperor honours, titles and presents. At most, the imperial government of China would sometimes send a Resident to supervise the affairs of these rulers and to report on them from time to time. In spite of Nan-Chao being a potential danger, China's interest lay in ensuring her goodwill and co-operation towards China for the maintenance of political stability in the so-called southern dominions. In the event of any great disturbance, such as a rebellion, the imperial government would despatch armed forces for quelling the same and enforcing loyalty to the Emperor. In those early days of difficult communication, it was never possible for China to maintain any effective control over these border States lying, as they did, at a great distance from the imperial head-quarters. China had therefore to be contented with the exercise of nominal suzerainty over them. But whenever an Emperor happens to be a man of weak character, intolerant, capricious and blood-thirsty, rebellions break out in the Empire and, in these circumstances, where possible, the Chinese suzerainty is overthrown by the non-Chinese vassal rulers, causing, at times, a change of the Chinese ruling dynasty itself.

It may also be noted that these native rulers were no less benefited from the existence of the Empire. But for the imperial supervision, however nominal, and the constant possibility of armed intervention by that authority, conflicts between the rival States of the south would have been more frequent with still worse consequences. On the other hand, the same lack of effective control over these States on the part of the imperial government was a large opportunity for any ambitious and enterprising prince to embark upon a career of conquests and empire-building. Prince Pi-lo-ko of the State of Meng-she actually played such a role to augment his power and expand his kingdom.

Pi-lo-ko died in A.D. 748¹⁵ and his son, Ko-lo-feng,¹⁶ succeeded to the throne at the age of thirty-six. W.W. Cochrane, who mastered well the Shan language and studied the history of the race, says that Ko-lo-feng is but the Chinese corruption of the Tai name Khun-Lu-Fung or Khun-Luang-Fung (meaning Lord Lu the Glorious).¹⁷ He made T'ai-Ho his residence. T'ai-Ho means 'great peace' in Chinese.¹⁸ According to Yang-tsai's narrative, the Emperor Tien-pao, probably Hsuan-Tsung (A.D. 712-56), the greatest Tang Emperor of China, sent Li-kiu-ih to install him as

15 According to some writers A.D. 749.

16 Some say that he was an adopted son.

17 Shans at Home, p. 9 ; Credner : Cultural and Geographical Observations etc., Bangkok, 1930, p.6.

18 GUBSS, 1.1, p. 265.

"King of Nan-Chao". By promoting friendship with the Chinese, he first incorporated a number of southern Ngai-Lao principalities with his kingdom and attacked and defeated the Tu'fan or Turfan (Tibetans) whose territorial ambitions were a threat to both western China and Nan-Chao. But once in A.D. 751, while Prince Ko-lo-feng was on a journey with his wife to pay a visit to General Li-ni,¹⁹ he received complaints from the people of his kingdom that two Chinese officers, probably neighbouring Governors, named Chang and Chia, had been behaving in a most impudent and offensive manner towards the people of Nan-Chao. According to another account, King Ko-lo-feng paid a visit to China, where he was insulted by the Governor of Hunan.²⁰ The Governor mentioned here might be one of the above two Governors, probably Governor Chang. Ko-lo-feng immediately sent Captain Yang as his personal envoy to report the matter to the Chinese Emperor, but the latter discourteously refused to listen to the charge. At this the Nan-Chao King felt himself further humiliated. So he himself proceeded to take strong action against the Chinese Governors. He despatched an armed force under General Wang to punish Chang, the chief offender. In the engagement that took place Chang was badly defeated but escaped being made a prisoner by poisoning himself to death.

When this news reached the imperial capital, the Emperor ordered an expedition of 80,000 troops under Generals

¹⁹ Li-pi according to Credner.

²⁰ Sarases ; op.cit., p. 12.

suen and Chang against Ko-lo-feng. The advance of this large army at first frightened Ko-lo-feng. So he made overtures to the imperial Generals for peace even by acknowledging his fault, but the latter paid no heed to his appeals and entered Yun-nan with a revengeful attitude. Ko-lo-feng made his last appeal to settle the matter by negotiation and with that object sent two officers to the Chinese Generals offering peace proposals, but the latter sent the two officers as prisoners to the Emperor.

When all attempts at peace failed, Ko-lo-feng resolved to fight and despatched his son Fung-cia-ih and his redoubtable General Twan with a strong force against the imperial army, of which General Li-kwang-Pi (perhaps Li-Pi as mentioned above) was the Commander-in-Chief.²¹ In A.D. 751, a great battle was fought near Hsia-Kwan on the route which, coming from the east, passes along the south shore of Erh-Hai (the Ts-li lake). The Chinese suffered disastrous reverses, with 60,000 of their troops being killed. It is said in the accounts that Ko-lo-feng then caused an enormous pit to be dug as a grave (a "wang sai-fen" or myriad tomb) in which the dead Chinese troops were buried. The inscription by the side of this grave reads : "The Tomb of the Chinese". This grave is still to be seen near the east entrance to the market city of Hsia-Kwan.²²

²¹ Credner : op.cit., p. 6.

²² JSS, vol.XL, Pt.I, 1952, p. 19 ; see also
Latourette : The Chinese : Their History and Cul-
ture (New York, 1946), p.188.

After this victory Ko-lo-feng styled his kingdom the 'Great Meng Empire'.²³ He also caused a marble slab to be engraved with the reasons which drove him to revolt. M. Emile Rocher first made mention of this tablet in his History of Yun-nan. Professor Dr. Wilhelm Credner has given in his monograph the photo of this Memorial Tablet taken by Yet-kui in A.D. 766 in July, 1930. It was set up by Ko-lo-feng to commemorate his victory over the Chinese army at Shia-Kwan (Hsia-Kwan) in the year 751. The inscription was drawn up by Ch'en-hwei and engraved on the marble slab by U-shih. This tablet of stone is probably the largest in south China. M. Carthew informs us that this stela is still to be seen "on the road from Hsia-Kwan to Ta-li about 8 li from Hsia-Kwan on the west side of the road". The tablet has fallen and now lies on its side. It is engraved on both sides and many characters can still be deciphered. The local name for it is Mau-chow-pei, which means the Tablet of the southern Princes.²⁴ Hsuan Tsung lived to witness the decline of the prestige of Chinese arms in the far off south for the first time. The inscription on the Tablet, among others, contains the following statement :- "My predecessors, generation after generation, submitted to China, and were repeatedly given titles and presents. My successors are permitted to revert to China. If a Chinese envoy should arrive, they can point to this stone

23 Meng or Mung being a Tai family to which Ko-lo-feng belonged.

24 JSS, vol.XL, Pt.I, 1952, p. 20.

Tablet and purge my crime". It is reproduced in translation by Cochrane in his account of "The Northern Shans". 25

* It is still not clear whether the language it was written in was Chinese, or Tai in Chinese characters.

Cochrane has not mentioned in what language the inscription but Reginald Le May says that it was written in Chinese. Cochrane was written. ~~But~~ says that the submission to China by Ko-lo-feng's predecessors does not mean subjugation, but only a friendly understanding with the Empire.

The T'ang Emperor Hsuan Tsung (or Ming Huang), the great contemporary of Ko-lo-feng, held the throne from A.D. 712 to 756. During his reign the T'ang Empire reached the zenith of its power. On the west, his great General Kao-Hsien-chih of Korean extraction pushed the frontiers of the Empire as far as the Upper Oxus valley in the north and the Upper Indus valley in the south in A.D. 747 and broke the strength of the Arabs and the Tibetans in that region bringing under Chinese suzerainty the local chiefs including the Indian princes then ruling in the Indus valley. 26 Kao Hsien-chih's expedition would remain a great landmark in the Annals of Chinese conquests. It not only proved the technical superiority of Chinese arms; but also enhanced greatly the prestige of the Empire among the races of Central Asia.

Emperor Hsuan Tsung was also known far and wide as a great promoter of music and culture. At Ch'angan, he founded an institution of music and culture called Hanlin Yuan to which scholars, musicians, magicians and even jugglers from all over Asia were drawn. Membership of

25 See Shans at Home by Milne and Cochrane, p.9.

26 Latourette, op.cit., p. 187.

Hanlin Yuan was a literary honour for a person. Ch'angan was then the new T'ang capital, which had been established by Kao Tsu, the first ruler of the dynasty (A.D. 618-26), not far from the site of the Ch'angan of the Han. Hsuan Tsung also founded a school for the teaching of music. It is recorded in the ancient Manipuri Chronicle that the Manipuri King Nao-Thing-Thing (or Nao-Thing-Thong), who then acknowledged the suzerainty of Nan-Chao under Ko-lo-feng, sent a well-trained party of dancers, singers and instrumental musicians to the Imperial Court of China as a goodwill mission.²⁷ It must have been a mission to Hsuan Tsung's Court.

But by A.D. 751 the Empire showed signs of decline. In that year Kao Hsien-chih suffered a bad defeat at the hands of the Arabs north of Ferghana. Thereafter in West China the imperial authority began to crumble down with the result that a large part of the West Chinese dominion passed into the hands of two Turkish peoples, the Karluks in the west and Uigurs in the north and east. At the same time the Khitans (Ch'i-tan) from southern Manchuria carried depredations

²⁷ Shri Kalawanta Singh : 'All India Radio talk', published in Natun Assamiya, 11th Oct., 1953.

W. Shaw writes from Manipuri sources 'In 707 A.D. the king of Thailand defeated the Manipuri King, Nao-Thing-Thong, which is a Kuki name. After that Manipur was ruled by the Thais for 10 years'. (See W. Shaw's article 'The Manipurians' in Eastern Sentinel, June 17, 1959, p.4). Since there was no independent Thai kingdom in Thailand in that early period the reference is apparently to Ko-lo-feng's conquest of Upper Burma and Assam including Manipur in the eighth century A.D. as described in the T'ang history.

into the plains of north China. In the south the Tai Emperor Ko-lo-feng won a decisive victory over the Chinese thereby ending all vestiges of Chinese suzerainty over Nan-Chao. But Ko-lo-feng felt that with a hostile China on the north his position was not secure. He therefore wanted to have a new ally against China. He knew that the Tibetans were remembering the injury done to them by China in A.D. 747. He therefore thought it expedient to make a treaty of alliance with the Tu'fan (the Tibetans), his former enemy. He thus threw in his lot with them. The Great Lama of Tibet was pleased to confer upon Ko-lo-feng a seal and the title of btsanpo-chung (i.e. "Younger brother Gialbo") which means ruler equal to the ruler of Tibet, but in rank next to the Great Lama and addressed him as Tung-Ti (the Emperor of the East). The Great Lama never recognises anybody on earth as his Elder owing to the Tibetan belief that they are senior to all other races and their country is the cradle of mankind.

Two years after the historic defeat at Hsia-Kwan the T'ang Emperor Tien-pao (Hsuan Tsung), under the pressure of internal problems, resorted to a conciliatory and persuasive policy towards Nan-Chao, then a powerful adversary of the Empire. He sent to Ko-lo-feng "Commissioners Ih and Lo with costly embroidered silk robes and various presents, styled him brother and gave him a gold seal. He also sent robes to Fung-cia-ih and made him a general".²⁸ As subsequent events

28 M. Carthew: ibid., in JSS, vol. XL, Pt. I, 1952, p. 19. Fung-cia-ih was the son of Ko-lo-feng.

proved, the Emperor had to take recourse to this policy of temporary appeasement just to gain time to prepare for a mightier blow to be dealt on Nan-Chao so as to bring that country under his heels. For in A.D. 755, an army of about a hundred thousand imperial troops under Generals Li and Ho came to chastise Ko-lo-feng. But, as if under Heaven's decree, a pestilence broke out in the Chinese camp taking a heavy toll of life from among the troops. The rest, after making a feeble attack on the capital, fled away leaving almost all their arms and treasures behind.

Waiting for the pestilence to subside the Emperor made the last biggest attempt to efface from the map the existence of Nan-Chao. This time a larger force from China came down upon Nan-Chao and a great battle took place. The whole imperial army was routed by two reputed generals of Nan-Chao, named Fung-cia-ih and Twan, the former being Ko-lo-feng's son. In the estimation of Chinese historians the losses of the imperial armies in their various campaigns against Nan-Chao were not less than 2,000,000 men. In A.D. 765 Fung-cia-ih built the city of Yun-nan-fu to strengthen the eastern defence of the Nan-Chao empire. It is said that the walls of this city still stood in A.D. 1383 when the city was rebuilt.

In the meantime, Ko-lo-feng strengthened his position by making friendship with Tibet and subjugated the neighbouring countries including parts of Burma and Assam. He also wrested large portions of Chinese territory. China, with all her vast army and resources, could not stop the progress of Ko-lo-feng's work of empire-building. Emperor Hsuan Tsung, by his

costly wars and court extravagances, drained the country of its wealth to such an extent that there was widespread poverty and suffering among the people. China was seething with discontent everywhere and the people were revolting against the government. In the north-east a powerful rebellion was led by a Turk named An Lu-Shan in 755. He was an important military Commander of the Emperor. An Lu-Shan proclaimed himself emperor of a large part of China north of the Yellow river. This rebellion proved to be one of the major causes of the decline of the Empire under the T'ang. On the western frontier, the Tibetans appeared to be a great menace. Even the most reputed Chinese generals, Kuo-Tzu-i and Li-Kwang-Pi, could not defeat the Tibetans. The Emperor's scandalous character was no less responsible for his increasing unpopularity among his subjects. He even did not hesitate to take into his own chamber, in 738, the wife of one of his sons as his chief favourite. Now at an age above fifty he indulged in a life of extravagance and gayety under the influence of this young lady. He also offended his influential supporters by giving to the unworthy members of her family high offices and rank.

When China was thus beset with her serious domestic problems, Ko-lo-feng, shortly after 754, turned his attention to the countries lying to the west and south of his kingdom and by a powerful drive extended his sway over the Irrawaddy valley of Burma and also a large part of Assam. E. H. Parker, by his original research in the Chinese sources, has brought out the important fact that Nan-Chao in the eighth century A.D.

bordered on Magadha of India. During the dark centuries preceding the emergence of the powerful Nan-Chao State the original Ngai-Lao habitat was somewhere nearer Burma. These people in the later period spread towards the north-east from the Upper Mekong valley and founded the kingdom of Nan-Chao with Ta-li as its central city. Nan-Chao rapidly expanded under the powerful Tai monarch Ko-lo-feng, who, after his dynastic title, styled it 'the Great Meng Empire'. His successors in the ninth century A.D. further extended the empire towards the east and south-east right upto Tong-King, whose capital Hanoi was captured in A.D. 863 by a Nan-Chao invading army,²⁹ probably, when Prince Shi-leng (Tien-lung : A.D. 859-77) was the Nan-Chao emperor. Parker points out that on the east Nan-Chao adjoined the Tsuan ; on the south-east it was connected with Chiao-chih (Tongking) ; on the west with Mo-Ch'ieh-t'o (magadha) ; on the north-west it joined on to Tu-fan (Tibet) ; on the south to Nu-wang, probably the Hsip-Hsawng-Panna ; on the south-west to P'iao or Pyu (Burma) ; on the north it reached I-chou ; on the north-east it connected with Chien-wu. The King's capital was Yang-chu-mieh city (Ta-li-fu). Another capital was Shan-Shan-Fu (Yun-nan-sen)³⁰.

In about the year A.D. 760 Ko-lo-feng annexed the country of the Pyu (Chinese P'iao) in Burma and also that of the Sun-chwan, which appears to have been an Assamese tribe. The Pyu, it is believed, belonged to the Tibetan stock and hence account for their eventual absorption by the Burmese. The Pyu

²⁹ Hall : A History of South-east Asia, p.121.

³⁰ "The Tan and the Ngai-Lao", JERS, vol. XIV, Part II, pp. 102-110

established themselves about the fifth century A.D. in Central Burma with their capital at Old Prome, now called Hmawza, on the Irrawaddy, while the Mons were in possession of Lower Bruma, but split up into two kingdoms, those of Thaton and Pegu. The Chronicles of the T'ang Dynasty (A.D. 606-918) describe Burma as containing eighteen States and nine walled towns, all dependent on the Pyu. The Pyu were Buddhist and cultured and used a kind of crescent-shaped gold and silver coins. Sri Ksetra (modern Hmawza), some five miles south-east of Prome, is the only Pyu site as yet searched with any thoroughness. Reginald Le May says that one of the earliest finds, at a place called Maunggan near Hmawza, consisted, inter alia, of gold plates, containing Buddhist texts in Pali, the script of which, Professor Finot says, is like the Kadamba script of Southern India of the fifth century A.D. The Pyu burnt their dead and stored up the ashes in urns. The urn inscriptions, as deciphered by Dr. Otto Hagedorn, reveal that a Vikrama dynasty reigned at Sri Ksetra (now Hmawza) from A.D. 673 to 718 and that it used Pyu script and language. The inscriptions mention three Vikrama rulers named Suriya Vikrama, Hari Vikrama and Siba (Simha) Vikrama. Suriya Vikrama died in A.D. 688 at the age of sixty-four. Hari Vikrama in A.D. 695 at the age of forty-one and Siba Vikrama in A.D. 718 at the age of forty-four. Hall points out that the dates are provisional, since the era is not stated.⁵¹

⁵¹ Epigraphia Indica, vol. XII, pp. 127-132, reprinted in JERS, vol. VII, pp. 37-44; vide also "The Ancient Pyu" by Luce in JERS, XXVII, III, 1937, pp. 242-47; Reginald Le May: op.cit., 45-7.

Chinese works from the fourth century A.D. onwards refer to the wild and savage tribes south-west of Yung-Ch'ang among whom there were cannibals. The most dreaded among them were the P'u who tattooed their bodies, used bows and arrows and mostly went naked. Apart from other causes these tribes rendered the journey from India to China via Yung-Ch'ang by the ancient routes most hazardous. Beyond the tracts of these wild tribes, at a distance of some 3,000 li south-west of Yung-Ch'ang, were the Pyu. The Pyu were the earliest known inhabitants of Burma.³² The Pyu capital Sri Ksetra existed in the seventh century A.D. and it was mentioned in that century by the Chinese pilgrims Hsuan-tsang³³ and I-tsing. The inscriptions left behind by the race appear to confirm the period during which it flourished in the kingdom of Sri Ksetra. Ruined monuments of the city walls are still to be seen in the site. The Pyu capital was finally destroyed by Nan-Chao in A.D. 832. But the Pyu came under Nan-Chao much earlier when their seat in the region of Halin in Shwebo district was annexed by Ko-lo-feng.

It is known from the Chinese sources that Prince Ko-lo-feng of Nan-Chao subjugated the Pyu and the tribes of the Upper Irrawaddy valley shortly after A.D. 754 and thus he is said to have "opened communications with the Pyu". But the statement of the New T'ang History is that "Nan-Chao,

32 D. G. E. Hall : A History of South-east Asia, (London, Macmillan), 1955, pp. 120-21.

33 Watters's Yuan Chwang.

on account of its military power and proximity, has always held the Pyu under ~~bridle~~ and control.³⁴ Ko-lo-feng also built a fortress to maintain his domination over the tribes living in the Irrawaddy valley. He used the Pyu and other subjugated tribesmen as soldiers and labourers in the service of his empire.³⁵ When a century later the Nan-Chao Prince Shi-leng invaded Ke-sha (the modern Hanoi) and overran Annam the Pyu were found to serve as soldiers in the Nan-Chao army. It may be noted that during the period of the Han Burma was called 'T'an' and in the T'ang period 'Piao' (Pyu).³⁶ According to Luce the Pyu-Nan-Chao frontier in A.D. 800 roughly corresponded with the Sino-Burman frontier of to-day in the neighbourhood of Bhamo.³⁷ In order to make the communications with the west secure Ko-lo-feng controlled the Upper Irrawaddy valley and also a part of Lower Burma.

China, being unable any longer to maintain her continued hold on the border territory near the Burma frontier, abolished the Yung-Ch'ang prefecture in A.D. 342 with the

³⁴ G. H. Luce I. "The Ancient Pyu" in JPRS, vol. XXVII, III, 1937, p. 248.

³⁵ Hall : Burma, (Hutchinson), 1950, p. 9.

³⁶ JSS, vol. XL, Pt. I, 1952, p. 24. The old pronunciation of p'iao, according to Karlgren (Analytic Dictionary, 727) was b'iau, in Cantonese p'iu - "The Tan and the Ngai-Lao" in JPRS, vol. XIV, Part II, p. 118. The kingdom of P'iao is described by the Chinese writers of the tenth century as having dominions whose extent was 'nine hundred miles from east to west'. Hallett points out that this statement must have 'incorporated the Kamboja, Man, and Laos Shans, and then would be slightly in excess'. Further the population of the kingdom is said to have included two hundred and ninety-eight different tribes, who professed Buddhism. - Hallett : ibid., p. 338.

³⁷ "The Ancient Pyu", op.cit., p. 248.

result that the old China-Burma communication route was virtually closed and had remained so until Ko-lo-feng re-opened it by his conquest of Burma. During his reign ancient routes of communication were developed and comparatively safer Journey ensured in this part of the Nan-Chao empire.

The land route from China to India connecting the T'ang Court with the Pyu capital was opened mostly with the help of Pyu conscripts. Luce has pointed out that "its stages are given in some detail by the Chinese minister Chia Tan^(Kia Tan) at the end of the 8th century. One route led due west from Yang-Ch'ang to T'eng-Yueh, and thence approximately by Waingmaw (Li-shui town), Mogaung (An-hsi town) and the Tazu Gap to Gauhati (Kamrupa) and Magadha. The other went south-west from Yung-Ch'ang to the Pyu capital³⁸ and so to Gauhati by the Chindwin and Manipur".³⁹ It may be noted that Chia Tan produced a map of the world based on the geographical accounts obtained from the numerous pilgrims and tribute-bearers who visited the Chinese Court.⁴⁰ In this connection it may be noted that Chavannes refers to a note of Hui-lin who points out that "The Tsang-ko (or old Ngai-lao in the extreme south-west of China) road was the shortest route from China to India, but

³⁸ From the description of this route it is highly improbable that the route connected Prome, which is so far south in the map, and then led up to the Chindwin and Manipur. It is most likely that this earlier Pyu capital was Halin-gyi in Shwebo district where traces of the Pyu rule have been found.

³⁹ "The Ancient Pyu" *JBERS*, XXVII, III, 1937, p.248.

⁴⁰ Soothill: *op.cit.*, p.45.

it was very dangerous ; it passed the places Yu-yao, Yueh-chueh, Pu-hsi and Yung-Ch'ang." It thus gives the trace of the route eastward beyond Yung-Ch'ang.⁴¹

That there was an overland route from India to China across Upper Burma from very early times is indicated clearly in the Chinese accounts. In 122 B.C. (?), for instance, when General Chang Ch'ien⁴² of Han Wu-Ti (140-87 B.C.) led an expedition to Ta-hsia (Tokharestan) he saw in the markets of Bactria Shu cloth, undoubtedly Sze-chuan silk, and Chiung bamboo.⁴³ He was told that those goods had come from south-east, from the Shen-tu kingdom (India). On enquiry he learnt that they had come from Yun-na and Sze-chuan across Upper Burma by way of the Yun-nan-Burma border and northern India.⁴⁴ Pelliot holds it to be very probable that it is by

⁴¹ JBRS, vol. XIV, Part II, p. 139.

⁴² Chang Ch'ien (Chang-k'ien) was sent by the Han Emperor, Wu-Ti, as his envoy in 138 B.C. to contact the Yueh-chih and solicit their alliance against the common enemy, the Hsiung-nu (Huns) of whose growing power the Chinese were afraid. Already the Yueh-chih had been driven westward by the powerful Hsiung-nu (Hsiung-nu). Chang Ch'ien made two adventurous expeditions to the new abode of the Yueh-chih somewhere in the neighbourhood of the Oxus. On his way through Chinese Turkestan he was captured by the Hsiung-nu who held him in 'honourable captivity' for some ten years before he could escape with his men and proceed on his mission. Chang Ch'ien contacted the Yueh-chih but failed to obtain their alliance as they were 'tired of fighting and trekking' and now wanted a peaceful life. He was again captured by the Hsiung-nu on his way back to China and released after one year's captivity. He reached China in 126 B.C. This was also the first penetration of the Chinese into the Tarim basin. W.W. Tarn : The Greeks in Bactria and India, (Cambridge), 1951, pp. 279-80.

⁴³ Laufer means by Chiung bamboo walking sticks of the square bamboo which grows in north-east Yun-nan. He also gives the date of Chang Ch'ien's arrival in Bactria as 128 B.C.

⁴⁴ JBRS, vol. XIV, Part II, p. 106 ; Pelliot : Deux Itinéraires as quoted in the Winternitze Memorial Number, 1938. pp. 181-82 by Prof : Nilkanta Sastri.

this way that the Hindus gained their first knowledge of the Chinese world.⁴⁵ Ta-hsia (Bactria) was anxious to communicate with China, but owing to the presence of the predatory Hsiung-nu tribes, who are said to have been Huns, direct overland trade route to the west could not be opened by China. Yet at the suggestion of Chang Ch'ien, Wu-Ti resorted to a caravan route via Tufan (Tibet), possibly to avoid contact with the Hsiung-nu, for exporting to Persia and Europe Chinese products such as silk fabrics, porcelain, precious minerals and other less bulky goods. But it must have been a very difficult and wearisome journey along such a route. It is believed that Chinese products first found their way to European markets from this time and China's trade with Bactria and Sogdiana rapidly grew with Khashgar as a convenient emporium. Chang Ch'ien also saw the advantage of opening a road to Ta-hsia via Sze-chuan and India. At his initiative a Chinese reconnoitring party was sent by the Emperor to Yun-nan for exploring this south-western route for commerce. The party advanced upto Tien (Yun-nan-fu) where the king Chang-Ch'iang of that country undertook to find them a route to the west. But his attempt failed and the Chinese exploration party, after waiting in K'un-ming for more than a year, had to return to the capital. The party, however, submitted a report to the Emperor on the lands and peoples they had seen in that journey and spoke well of Tien saying that it was a big country deserving friendship of the Han.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 182.

⁴⁶ JERS, vol. XIV, Part II, p. 106.

In view of this failure of China to find a way out to the west across south-west China it is doubtful whether the 'Chinese products' had ever reached the markets of Bactria by an overland route through Burma and India. For long centuries preceding the Christian era south-west China was in occupation of the Tai and other barbarian tribes whom the Chinese could not effectively subjugate and for whom the road to India via Yun-nan and Burma remained closed to China until the submission of the Ngai-Lao in A.D. 69 when it was possible for the Chinese to cross the Mekong for the first time and found the prefecture of Yung-Ch'ang, the headquarters of which lay east of the Salween, some sixty miles from the present Burma frontier.⁴⁷ This extension of Chinese dominions opened up the earliest overland gateway to Burma and made it possible for Chu-ko-Liang in A.D. 226 to enter that country in pursuit of Meng-huo. Therefore, we know from I-tsing that at the end of the third century A.D. a batch of about twenty Chinese monks found their way, "by the Tsang-ko road in the province of Shu" to the court of Sri Gupta who founded the Gupta dynasty.

It may be noted that during the period from the end of the Han rule to the beginning of that of the Sui China was weakened by civil strife, internal divisions and foreign invasions. Civil strife ensued chiefly among the

⁴⁷ "Burma Down To The Fall of Pagan" By G. H. Luce and Pe Maung Tin in JBSC, vol. XXIX, Part III, Dec., 1939, p. 264.

members of the royal family. The non-Chinese chiefs in the north, taking advantage of these domestic troubles of China, extended their conquests into Chinese territory and some even aspired to the title of Emperor. In the south a branch of the Ssu-ma family, known as the Eastern Chin, reigned precariously with its capital on the Yangtze in the site of the present Nan-king. Sze-chuan was dominated by a war-lord, named Huan Wen of the Eastern Chin. This period (A.D. 220-589) in China is also marked by a phase called the period of Six Dynasties, namely, the Wu, the Eastern Chin, the Liu Sung, the Southern Ch'i, the Liang and the Ch'ei. Thus being seriously disabled under a process of disintegration China lost her control over most of the non-Chinese races that had been acknowledging her suzerainty. It was also during this period that she lost her hold on the Ngai-Lao in western Yun-nan which led to the ultimate abolition of Yung-Ch'ang Chun. For the next few centuries China virtually abandoned Yun-nan and the land-route through that country and, as is indicated by the Chinese sources, took to the sea-routes for communication with the west.⁴⁸

Again with the development of general communications and their comparative security under Ko-lo-feng in the eighth century A.D. it became possible for Buddhist missionaries to travel from the country of the Pyu to the capital of Nan-Chao by the overland routes. It should be remembered that Theravada

⁴⁸ Ibid., JERS, vol. XXIX, Part III, 1939, p. 266.

Buddhism of south India had a flourishing centre in Old Prome or Sriksatra, the capital of the Pyu. The spread of Buddhism among the Pyu from this centre is attested by the Pali inscriptions and writings on gold plates, stones and a gold-leaf book discovered in Hmayza between 1897 and 1926 and also by the existence of numerous Buddhist sculptures and ruined monuments dating from about the sixth century A.D. down to tenth century A.D.⁴⁹ The evidence of the T'ang Annals also says referring to the Pyu that "they are Buddhists and have a hundred monasteries".⁵⁰ Yet the religious remains of this area are not unmixed, for numerous stone sculptures of Vishnu and bronze statuettes of Avalokitesvara and other Manayanist Bodhisattvas have also been found.⁵¹ The development of intercourse with the Pyu since Ko-lo-feng's reign led to a tremendous revival of Buddhism in Nan-Chao in A.D. 827 and the traditional Taoist religion lost royal patronage. Although Buddhism of the Great Vehicle had entered Yun-nan at a much earlier date it could not supplant the prevailing Taoist religion and the Dragon cult of that country, but when Ko-lo-feng's enterprise opened up the flood-gate to religious and cultural influences of India to come as a wave, their impact revolutionised the religious beliefs and social outlook of the peoples of Nan-Chao, and

49 Nihar-ranjan Ray : Theravada Buddhism in Burma, (University of Calcutta), 1946, pp. 33-46.

50 Parker : Burma with special reference to her relations with China, 1893, p. 12.

51 Hall : A History of South-east Asia, 1955, p.121.

since that time Buddhism in its various mixed forms had continued to become the dominant religion of Yun-nan.

After a reign of thirty-two years Ko-lo-feng died in A.D. 778.⁵² He was the real builder of the Nan-Chao Empire. In him is seen a matchless combination of military prowess and unrivalled statesmanship, the twin foundations of strength that enabled him to withstand gloriously the mighty assaults of the Chinese Empire. The Chinese prestige was shattered in the trial of strength with this southern potentate and Nan-Chao came to stay with an enhanced pride as a second empire south of China for about four and a half centuries more.

While Ko-lo-feng was still reigning, his valiant son, Fong-ch'ieh-i died. On Ko-lo-feng's death his grandson I-mou-hsun (Yi-Men-Sin) was installed as successor in A.D. 780. It is said that I-mou-hsun's mother belonged to the Tukkin tribe. This young prince imbibed some of the qualities of his great predecessors. With his talents for rule he also combined an amount of learning. In his early age a wise man, named Ch'eng-hue, a Chinese ex-magistrate, acted as his tutor. I-mou-hsun was a tactful and intelligent ruler, who conducted the affairs of the State with firmness and vigour like the great Ko-lo-feng.

After the assumption of royal power he made preparations to extend the empire by annexing the southern dominions of the T'ang. He raised an army of 30,000 men for the projected campaign. In this great undertaking he also secured the co-operation of the Tibetans, who had their designs on the frontier

⁵² According to some writers A.D. 779.

tracts of the Empire. The allied forces then invaded the Chinese province of Shu (Sze-Chuan) but were repulsed with heavy losses by the Chinese. This major reverse at the very start curbed the ambition of I-mou-hsun to annex any part of the Chinese territory. The defeat also rendered the northern defences of Nan-Chao vulnerable to Chinese attack. In face of this situation I-mou-hsun had to transfer his Court from Tai-ho to Tsu-me further south in the neighbourhood of Ho-mein (Teng-Yueh). He was also advised by the wise Ch'eng-hue to immediately negotiate with China for peace in order to ensure future security of the kingdom. As it was the only course of expediency at the moment I-mou-hsun accepted the advice and started negotiation with the Chinese Governor of Ch'eng-tu, named We Kao, for the restoration of the old good relation of Nan-Chao with the Empire.

But this policy of I-mou-hsun aroused great suspicion in the minds of the Tibetans, who had tried in vain to dissuade him from such a course. The Tibetans then started warlike preparations on the border territories of Nan-Chao. They established garrisons at all strategic points, raised levies on a war footing and collected imposts from the people. Apprehending danger from such activities of the erstwhile ally I-mou-hsun addressed a note to Governor We Kao apprising him of the ominous developments on the Tibetan frontier and requested him for a joint action against them. He also suggested that the Uighour Turks be directed to join the Nan-Chao-Chinese forces in an expedition against Tibet. The Uighour Turks were then in occupation of parts of the modern Kansu province with their capital at what is now called Urumtsi.

I-mou-hsun's request ultimately bore fruit and a treaty was signed between China and Nan-Chao at the foot of the Tien-Tsang Shan which commands Ta-li. Four copies of the treaty were made. One copy was placed in the stone temple ; one was sunk in the sacred waters of the river of the Ta-li lake or perhaps the Ta-li lake itself ; one was lodged in the ancestral shrine of the Nan-Chao monarch ; and one was sent to the Emperor of China.⁵³ The significance of all these elaborate ceremonial processes in the making of the treaty was probably to emphasize the solemnity of the vow to respect its terms. But as a sequel to the conclusion of the treaty We Kao was appointed Regent of Nan-Chao by the Emperor whom I-mou-hsun had to accept. It seems the terms of the treaty included clauses whereby I-mou-hsun also acknowledged over again the suzerainty of China. This state of things for Nan-Chao was the culmination of his too ambitious a policy of aggrandizement at the cost of China, whose territory he had invaded without a proper appraisal of her strength.

In A.D. 795 the Tibetans, as expected, started the offensive by waging a war against Nan-Chao. I-mou-hsun replied by capturing the Tibetan officials in his kingdom and putting them to death. Meanwhile the Uighour Turks (a people of Eastern Turkestan) attacked and defeated the Tibetans in a battle. The Nan-Chao army met the Tibetans near the Iron Bridge over the Kin-sha river, a tributary of the Yang-tse-Kiang in western Yun-nan and "the brass column which marked the boundary between

⁵³ GUBSS: 1.1, p. 266.

Nan-Chao and Tibet about 250 li north of Likiang-fu" and a sanguinary battle ensued which resulted in a decisive victory for I-mou-hsun. The Tibetan loss in men and material was enormous. I-mou-hsun took sixteen towns and cut the Iron Bridge. He fought this war not only on his own behalf but also on behalf of China. He despatched the news of his victory with a map of the conquered territory to the Emperor. He sent his brother Prince Tse, accompanied by an officer, to carry that news to the Chinese Court.

Emperor Chen-tien,⁵⁴ was very pleased to receive the news of the victory over the Tibetans and acknowledged it with gratitude. The Emperor, in recognition of the great achievement of the Nan-Chao ruler, invested him with the title of "Nan-Chao Wang" ("King of Nan-Chao"). The ceremony of investiture would give an idea of the royal customs of those days. The Emperor deputed Yuan-tze (or Ts'ui Tso-shih) as his envoy-extraordinary to confer upon I-mou-hsun "a yellow gold seal", or, according to Yang-tsai "gold and silver seals",⁵⁵ inscribed with "reign 705-805, patenting Nan-Chao".⁵⁶ The Chinese envoy was received with great ceremony and pomp at Tai-ho, to which place the Court was probably shifted again after the treaty. When the envoy arrived at Tai-ho, Prince I-mou-hsun sent his elder brother and a group of officers with him, with sixty-five horses, to welcome and

⁵⁴ or Teh-chung, the 10th Emperor of the T'ang according to Hoontrakul - op.cit., p. 92.

⁵⁵ JSS, XI - Pt. I, 1952, p. 21.

⁵⁶ This seal or plaque inscribed with "Nan-Chao, 705-805" is referred to also by W. H. Cochrane, vide his "The Origin of the Ahoms" in JRAS, vol. 1914, p. 151. Mentioned also in Shans at Home by Milne and Cochrane, p. 11.

escort him to the capital. "Their harness was adorned with gold and cowries, and the soldiers lined the road with their jingling staves shouldered. I-mou-hsun wore a coat of gold mail and a tiger-skin, and carried a sheath with two jingles upon it. A thousand men with spears stood on guard, twelve elephants drawn up in front, with the cavalry between, and the foot regiment in the rear. At day-break the next the patent was conferred upon him. I-mou-hsun, at the head of his suite of officers, stood facing the north. The proclaimer faced east, and the patent-conveying envoy faced south. The mandate of the patent was then read out". I-mou-hsun knelt to receive the patent and seal. "He knocked his head on the ground, and bowed twice, and then received the presents of clothes and other things". Retiring he said "During the two reigns, A.D. 718-756, my great-grand-father and grand-father both received patents as hereditary kings. Fifty years have since elapsed, and the present Emperor has now washed my scars, and recorded my services, once more conferring rank and commands upon me. My sons^{sons} and grandsons' grandsons will for ever be subjects of China".⁵⁷ Then followed a great banquet, at which some Turkish women, presented by a former Emperor, sang songs. Their hair was quite white, as they were the only two survivors of a once large musical troupe.⁵⁸

The account given above describes the pattern of political relation that subsisted between China and Nan-Chao under

⁵⁷ Cochrane in Shans at Home by Milne and Cochrane, pp. 11-12.

⁵⁸ GUESS, I.I., p.266.

the Meng Dynasty. The relation, apart from the elaborate ceremonial forms, was undoubtedly one of the Emperor's formal recognition of the 'King of Nan-Chao' and the latter's acceptance of the same in the shape of the title and the seal. Nothing is known about the actual powers of intervention on the part of the imperial authority in the matters of administration of this vassal kingdom. If the king is strong and follows his policy with a firm hand the suzerain power cannot stand in his way and even remains severed for long periods. But, at times, it is to the advantage of a ruler to get formal recognition and investiture of power from the Emperor as it adds not only a superior dignity to his position as the "King of Nan-Chao" above the inferior status of other ruling Chiefs, but also makes for the kingdom's increased strength and security against the troublesome neighbours, such as Tibet and Burma.

Having settled the problem of Chinese danger I-mou-hsun attacked and reduced to submission the "savage tribes" known as the Mang, Mo and Shi that lived on the hills north-west and north-east of Ta-li. These tribes are described as "black barbarians", a term used by the Chinese in reference to the Ngai-Lao also. There were among them Tai or Ngai-Lao splinter groups cut off from the main body when earlier the Ch'in attacked and scattered them. Their long isolation from the bulk of the race in the peculiar geographical conditions of Yun-nan and Sze-chuan made them appear as aborigines of the hills as distinct from the ruling group in the plains. Besides these, the other savage tribes that were brought under subjection by I-mou-hsun were the Lung-tung of the 'white race',

who might be a Karen tribe, and Han-Shang, who were supposed to be of Chinese descent.

During the next few years, particularly since A.D. 799,⁵⁹ Nan-Chao was engaged in a continual war with Tibet owing to the aggression of the latter into that kingdom from the north occupying a strip of its territory. In this war I-mou-hsun had assistance from Governor Kao of Ch'eng-tu. Meanwhile, the Tibetans put into the field an army of eight thousand men against Nan-Chao with provisions for one year. The war began with the first series of combats in the south-western part of Sze-chuan which continued for a number of years. The Nan-Chao army from the south and the Chinese and the Uighour Turks from the west and north-west hammered the Tibetans so effectively that the latter had to retreat with heavy losses and the allied forces entered the Tibetan territory occupying seven cities and burning one hundred and fifty military stations during the advance. Several thousand heads of the Tibetans were cut off. A large booty of arms and supplies, left by the Tibetans, fell into the hands of the allied forces. In fact "it was the Nan-Chao that attacked their most vital parts, and made the largest captures of prisoners and plunder".⁶⁰ I-mou-hsun captured, among others, five Tibetan Princes, whom he sent as prisoners to the Imperial Court. The Emperor responded by sending an officer to congratulate I-mou-hsun. The Nan-Chao monarch honoured his treaty with China and remained loyal to the Emperor till his death in the seventh

⁵⁹ According to another account A.D. 796.

⁶⁰ Milne and Cochrane : *op.cit.*, p. 13.

Moon of A.D. 809. He ruled for thirty years.⁶¹ On receiving the news of his death Emperor U-ien sent the President of the Sacrificial Court of the imperial government as a special envoy to Nan-Chao to offer condolences and sacrifices to his spirit.

Prince Su-in-ke-cwien (Sin-ko-kiang), son of I-mou-hsun, succeeded to the throne of Nan-Chao in 809 and received from Emperor U-ien-he a gold seal and a very high honorific title. The enlarged territory of his kingdom demanded a second capital in the east. The city of Yun-nan-fu, already built by Fung-cia-ih, was therefore made the Eastern Capital of Nan-Chao in addition to Ta-li, which was made the Western Capital. He, however, died after a reign of one year and was succeeded by his son Prince C'wien-long-chen, who was only twelve years old.

Prince C'wien-long-chen (Kian-Lung-Sing) appears to have been a great promoter of Buddhism, for he made three Buddhas with 3,000 ounces of gold and installed them in a temple at Ta-li-fu. The origin of the famous Three Pagodas of San-ta-si (San-T'a-T'zu) ^{at} Ta-li is to be traced to these Three Buddhas. In 815 he invaded Sze-chuan. The story runs that at Kia-ting-chew his troops were horrified to see a strange vision of troops fighting in the air and being dispersed in disorder. It is also said that the inhabitants afterwards built a temple at Kia-ting-chew called the Fu-t'ien-shon-miao to commemorate this event. In a few years the young prince became such a wicked character that he was murdered by one of his own officials, named Wang-kia, at the age of nineteen years.

⁶¹ According to Hoontrakal 16 years. - see op.cit., p.92.

He was succeeded by his brother C'wien-li (Kian-Li-Sing) in 817. The Emperor forgave Wang-Kia for the murder, but reduced him in rank. It is perhaps one of the few instances in which the Emperor exercised his paramount authority to intervene in the internal affairs of Nan-Chao. Prince C'wien-li repaired the old pagodas and built a number of new ones. A stone tablet in the Dragon Temple in the east of Ta-li in the lake area, bears the inscription that during the reign of this king the water level of the lake rose to an unprecedented height owing to the presence of a huge serpent-like monster or dragon that had entered the lake. The Prince ordered the dragon to be killed and it was killed. Whether the Dragon Temple at Ta-li was built to commemorate this event or had been standing there as a monument of native dragon worship nothing is definitely known. But the stone inscription testifies to the fact that ~~that~~ the dragon cult was no longer favoured by the royal court. The Prince, after eight years of his reign, in 825 received from the Emperor Chang-kui a gold seal. In the same year he died at Yun-nan-fu, the Eastern Capital of the realm.

On his death his brother Fong-yeh (Hung-Jew), then only seven years old, succeeded to the throne in 825. The young Prince's coronation was attended by a Chinese official Wai, who was sent by the Emperor as his representative on this occasion. But within a few years Fong-yeh came into clash with an arrogant Chinese mandarin named Tu, who was posted at Ch'eng-tu in Sze-chuan. Tu so maltreated the Chinese troops under him that the latter broke into a mutiny and large numbers of them deserted his army and entered Nan-Chao for protection. Prince Fong-yeh sent General

Wang-kia with a force to Ch'eng-tu to investigate the situation. But Governor Tu replied by attacking Wang-kia's troops. Immediately there was a fight and Tu was defeated. Wang-kia then returned triumphantly to the capital with a large number of Chinese prisoners and artisans and a vast booty. These artisans were a great asset to Nan-Chao in the reconstruction of her industries. This event appears to be the same as that mentioned by Cochrane and said to have happened in A.D. 829.⁶² In that year, as he has said, the Shan Commander-in-Chief of Lung-tung invaded Sze-chuan advancing to the very gates of Cheng-tu-fu. The Commander-in-Chief, mentioned by him, was probably General Wang-kia himself.

Chinese Annals further relate that while returning after the victory the Nan-Chao General took forcibly with him 'several myriad boys, girls, and artizans'. From that time, it is said, 'Nan-Chao was on a par with China in matters concerning art, literature and weaving'. From this it would be wrong to think that Nan-Chao borrowed them entirely from the Chinese. For it is clearly mentioned in the early Chinese Annals, such as Ch'ien han shu and Hou han-shu that the Ngai-Lao knew how to dye with gay colours, make and embroider Chi-to (rugs made of animal hair) and po-tieh (brocaded silk and cotton) and weave flowered and fine cloth. They also knew the arts of making beautiful metallic goods, such as those of copper, iron, lead, tin, gold, silver, amber and also of bright pearls.⁶³ As regards the

62 Cochrane : "The Northern Shans" in Shans at Home, p. 13.

63 "The Ngai-Lao" in JBRS, vol. XIV, Part II, pp. 115-18.

literature of the early Tai, it has already been said that they had men of letters and a rich literature before they were deprived of them in the Chinese territory by the ruthless policy of destruction initiated by Shih-Wang-Ti.

In 831 Prince Fong-yeh wrote to the Emperor T'ai-he about the Ch'eng-tu incident and requested him to take action against Governor Tu for the latter's unprovoked hostility towards Nan-Chao. The Emperor, after investigating into the matter, degraded Tu appointing General Li-teh to that post. But General Li-teh's conduct was found to be no better than his predecessor's with the unfortunate result that there ensued an era of hostility between Ch'eng-tu and Nan-Chao. The greatest event of Fong-yeh's reign was the invasion of Nan-Chao by General Li-teh in 860 with an army of 100,000 men. But Prince Fong-yeh proved more than a match for the Chinese General of Sze-chuan. The latter's army was routed by Fong-yeh's forces near Ch'ien-chang-fu in Sze-chuan. Soon after this defeat Li-teh was beheaded by the order of the Imperial Government.

Just at that juncture a serious rebellion broke out among the imperial troops in Sze-chuan. Large numbers of these rebels joined the Tibetans and proceeded to invade Nan-Chao. The famous Nan-Chao General, Wang-kia, expeditiously marched with his army to resist the invaders and engaged them in a bloody battle near the Iron Bridge on the Tibetan frontier inflicting a heavy defeat on them. The Chinese alone lost ten thousand men.

In 859 Prince Fong-yeh also sent an expeditionary force under General Twan-seng to the assistance of the king of Burma on whose kingdom an attack was made by the "Lion Kingdom".

This Lion Kingdom was probably the Mon kingdom, which, with its capital at Dvaravati in south Siam, had been pressing towards Lower Burma and founded the city of Pegu in A.D. 825 in the region referred to by the Arab geographers as Raman'n'a-desa. The Burmese, with the help of Nan-Chao, successfully repulsed the enemy and the Burmese king presented Twan-seng with a gold Buddha as a mark of gratitude for the help.⁶⁴ Before the arrival of Twan-seng from his Burma campaign Fong-yeh died at Yun-nan-fu early in 860 and was succeeded by his son Shi-leng⁶⁵ (Tien-Lung or Ts'in Lung) in his sixteenth year. General Wang-kia, who was then acting as Regent, went to welcome Twan-seng when the latter was reaching the capital. But Twan-seng most treacherously killed the veteran General of Nan-Chao at the very place of welcome to avenge the murder of Prince C'wien-leng-chen by the latter. Thus ended in a tragic state the life of one of the greatest Tai generals whose brilliant military career had earned for him a great reputation and whose glorious victories in the wars against China and Tibet immensely enhanced the prestige of Nan-Chao.

Prince Fong-yeh's reign was also noted for a great economic development and a religious revival in the kingdom. Even to this day are to be seen in the areas of ancient marshy lands traces of his extensive irrigation works by which the marshes were drained into the great lake. A strong dam was constructed in the Li-hu ravine at a place about 10 li south of Ta-li forming

⁶⁴ "The History of the Thai in Yun-nan" in JSS, vol. XL, Part I, 1952, p.24.

⁶⁵ According to Scott "In 859 A.D. one Ts'in Lung, who seems to have been a Shan official rather than a member of the 'family of Meng', became ruler of Nan-Chao, assumed the title of Hwang-ti" - QJBSS, I.I, (Rangoon), 1900, p.267.

a large reservoir of water from which, in the dry season, water could be led off by means of canals to irrigate the rice fields. This work lasts to this day and its local name is "Kao-no" ("The High Pool"). All these he did to relieve the people from suffering due to a long drought which occurred during his reign.

Under the patronage of this king there was a great revival of Buddhism in the country. He built many temples and completed the work of restoring from ruin what were called the Three Pagodas which are still standing north-west of Ta-li. He also repaired the two pagodas built originally in A.D. 631 on the eastern side of the Wu-hwa-shan in Yun-nan-fu. The king's mother became a devout Buddhist nun and used 5,000 ounces of silver to decorate a room with statuettes of the Buddha in the temple at San-ta-si, where she used to pass the later part of her life. In 827 the king expelled the traditional Taoist priests from Nan-Chao. In a sense it was a revolutionary period of religious change in the kingdom. The king took particular interest in the welfare of the subjects. Under Buddhist influence he also practised abstinence from wine and women, of which he had excessive love, and tried to lead a pure and good life.

The death of Wang-kia exposed the life of the young prince Shi-leng (Ts'in Lung, Yu-Lung or Tien-lung) to the conspiracies of the Court. The situation became critical when an influential minister named Chen-nai-i attempted to murder him. The prince's mother, who was a fisherman's daughter, was noted for her beauty. Her union with the late king was the result of a scandalous connection. Emperor Ta-chang of China was about to offer a princess of the imperial family to Shi-leng, but his

ministers dissuaded him from doing so owing to the "low birth of the Prince's mother."⁶⁶ At this time the prince's mother had already become a Buddhist nun.

Some of the earlier princes of the Meng family of Nan-Chao used to pay tributes to China, but C'wien-long-chen, Fong-yeh and Shi-leng stopped them. But the Emperor thought that he had yet a rightful claim to such tributes. He therefore sent an army to demand tributes from Prince Shi-leng, but the latter in 863 attacked the Chinese in Sze-chuan and completely defeated them and took a stone Buddha, very much revered by the natives, as a trophy. In the same year his army of Tai and Pyu soldiers invaded Tongking and captured Hanoi and overran Annam.⁶⁷ Since then the initiative passed into the hands of Nan-Chao, the formidable rival of China. Knowing the weaknesses of China Nan-Chao started a long war against her which, with occasional intervals, continued for the next fifteen years. During these years, under imperialist oppressions, the fighting Tai were in revolt in Kwang-tung and Kwang-si and carried on guerilla warfare against the Chinese. The Chinese Provinces of Sze-chuan and Kwei-chow were invaded by Nan-Chao and the southern defences of China^{were} about to collapse. The story runs that in one of the earlier campaigns in Sze-chuan the Nan-Chao army had to face a desperate state for failure of rations, but a Buddhist monk, named

⁶⁶ JSS, vol. XL, Pt. I, 1952, p.25.

⁶⁷ GUBSS, I.I, p.267, Hall : A History of South-east Asia, (Macmillan, London), 1955, p.121.

Song, performed the miracle of turning the sands into rice and the waters of the river into wine. The army then had an abundance of supply of food and drink and fought with great success. On another occasion a Nan-Chao officer, named Tong-chou, was captured by the Chinese, but, on request from Prince Shi-leng, was released by the Emperor. An embassy was then sent to China in 870 to thank the Emperor for the magnanimous act. But the inhuman treatment, with which the Chinese officers dealt with the tribes, was retaliated by the Shans by slaughtering the Chinese who fell into their hands.

Next year (871) a Nan-Chao force made another thrust into Sze-chuan capturing in a powerful sweep a number of towns and reaching Ch'eng-tu for the final blow. The Chinese Governor Lu at Ch'eng-tu was hard put to the task of defending the city under desperate conditions. He had to resort to overtures for peace with the Generals of the invading army just to gain time for the arrival of reinforcements from the imperial headquarters. In the meantime, there was an excessive concentration of civilian population for safety inside the fortifications of the capital town leaving hardly any space even for standing. The enormous crowd of men, women and children desperately struggled for space, food and water, and when the waters of the "Great Pond" were exhausted many resorted to 'squeezing a drink out of basketfuls of sand.' Many died under hunger and pressure. For want of coffins 'the dead were buried whole-sale in pits'. The capital was just saved from surrendering by the last-moment arrival of two imperial Generals, Jen and Seng, with troops. They halted the advance

of the besieging army and pushed them off from the capital.⁶⁸ But while leaving Ch'eng-tu the Ngai-Lao Shans committed acts of reprisal of a barbaric nature. "The savages," writes the Chinese annalists, "had cut off the noses and ears of all the Chinese prisoners, and let them go, so that eighty per cent of the residents had artificial noses and ears of wood."⁶⁹ In the meantime China had serious domestic troubles and Emperor Chao-Suan-Ti of T'ang was murdered and with it the T'ang dynasty came to an end. No imperial forces could therefore be sent again to repel the aggressors.⁷⁰ At this time Ch'eng-tu marked the northern limit of the Nan-Chao empire and it had also the main military headquarters of China for southern defence. Though Ch'eng-tu was the scene of many great battles between China and Nan-Chao and was for a time annexed by the latter, yet the hold on the city was never complete and continued.

In 874 Prince Shi-leng again invaded Kwei-chow and his General Hwang led an expedition to Sze-chuan and advanced right unto the very gates of Ch'eng-tu-fu, but was forced to beat a retreat by the Chinese garrison. It was also the moment when peace was concluded between China and Tibet, which to a great extent neutralised the power of Nan-Chao so far the China-Nan-Chao frontier is concerned.

68 L. Hoontrakul says that Shi-leng actually annexed Ch'eng-tu in 870. The city was recovered by the Chinese only in 881 when Leng-Shwen was reigning at Ta-li. But when the imperial troops returned to the capital Leng-shwen recaptured the city - op.cit., p. 93.

69 Cochrane : op.cit., p.14 ; GUBSS, I.I, p.267.

70 L. Hoontrakul : ibid., p.93.

After an interval of two years Shi-leng made an attack on Yah-choo, but was repulsed by its Governor Kao. This increasing pressure from Nan-Chao made the Emperor negotiate for peace in 877 and, as desired by Shi-leng, a Buddhist monk was sent by Governor Kao as an intermediary. But there was no peace agreement and Prince Shi-leng made his last effort to annex Sze-chuan. His attack on Sze-chuan was, however, repulsed by Governor Kao.⁷¹ Soon after this failure Prince Shi-leng suddenly fell ill with a virulent attack of fever and died in the Kui-tsiu Temple in Ueh-shi-ting in Sze-chuan. He reigned for eighteen years.

According to Yang-tsai's account Prince Shi-leng was given the posthumous title of "Emperor"⁷² and his successors enjoyed the title for nearly forty-four years as a posthumous honour until Nan-Chao was conquered by Kublai Khan in A.D. 1253.⁷³ As the title was never given to them during their life-time the Emperor of China did not object to it. Regarding the assumption of the title of "Emperor" by the Nan-Chao Kings Credner writes that "in the 9th century A.D. the power of the kingdom, after victorious campaigns

⁷¹ Kao appears from time to time as Governor of some province, Ch'eng-tu, Yah-choo or some others since the time of I-mou-hsun. It is probably a family name and not the name of a particular person and many Governors were appointed from the Kao family.

⁷² By whom the title was given is not mentioned. It was probably the official title given by the ruling family of Nan-Chao after the death of the monarch, since the Chinese Emperors would not tolerate the existence of another living Emperor within the sphere of influence of the Chinese Empire in East Asia. But the great Ko-lo-feng declared Nan-Chao as the 'Great Hong Empire' after defeating China and stopping tribute. He was an emperor in true sense of the term.

⁷³ JSS, vol - XL, Pt. I, 1952, *ibid.*, p.26.

down to Tongking, was so great that King Yulung, whose realm then stretched from Assam to Tonking (859 A.D.) could adopt the title of emperor of Ta-li.⁷⁴ From chronological evidences and historical accounts it appears that Yulung was but another name for Shi-leng or a phonetic variation of the latter and that Tongking had probably been conquered by Shi-leng's predecessor Fong-yeh though history is not clear about it.

According to the Chinese conception of monarchy only the Supreme Ruler of China, the Son of Heaven or Tientze, had the exclusive right to the title of 'Emperor' on earth and he is also called Min-ki-Fuh-muh, the people's father-mother and he becomes the ruler of everything under heaven.⁷⁵ In the Chinese historical classics there is mention of the Shang Emperor Puen-Kang being the first to be honorifically addressed as "the Son of Heaven" by Yueh about 1399 B.C.⁷⁶ In keeping with this tradition the Chinese Emperors conceded the title of 'Emperor', which could not be resisted any longer, to the powerful kings of Nan-Chao, not, however, when the latter were alive and ruling, but after their death.

Prince Leng-shwen (Lung-shun) alias Fa, as the Chinese called him, next succeeded to the throne of Nan-Chao at the age of seventeen. The Chinese, whose southern territories had been repeatedly invaded by Prince Shi-leng, were expected to invade Nan-Chao at any time. Hence, with a view

⁷⁴ Credner : ibid., p. 6. ; A Rosthorn : Geschichte Chinas, 1923, p. 119 referred to by Credner.

⁷⁵ Walter Old : trans. The Shu King, (The Theosophical Publishing Society, New York, 1904, pp. 169.

to bring about reconciliation with China Prince Leng-shwen sent an embassy to the Imperial Court with proposals of peace and friendship between the two countries. The embassy was received hospitably by the Emperor and peace was granted. All was not well at Nan-Chao at this time and China's friendship was of great value to the kingdom. Emperor Cheng-he sent not only a very friendly letter to Prince Leng-shwen, but in 884 sent also a princess of the Royal Household as a wife to him. Since then Chinese envoys used to visit the Court of Nan-Chao and diplomatic relations began to develop between the two countries.

As a ruler Leng-shwen proved to be unworthy and incompetent. He was a most sensual and dissipated man. He was more after his personal pleasures than the duties of his office which he left entirely to his officials. He was therefore greatly disliked by the subjects. Being dissolute in character he soon fell under the baneful influences of his concubines at whose instance he murdered several of his servants in 898. As a result he was hated by his own attendants and was murdered by one of his own servants named Yang at Yun-nan-fu. He reigned for twenty years and was given the posthumous title of Emperor.

He was succeeded in 898 by his son Shwen-hwa, then twenty-one years old. In 900 Prince Shwen-hwa executed Yang and his family to avenge the murder of his father. He was, however, a promoter of education and Emperor Kang-ming of China established five Colleges in Nan-Chao in the year 900. He reigned for five years and died in 903 leaving behind

an infant son of eight months to succeed him.

A Chinese officer of the Court, named Cheng-mai-su of the Chang family, became the guardian of the child and acted as the regent. This man had been previously an officer of the Chinese government at Ueh-chew in Sze-chuan, but was charged with certain grave misdeeds on his part. He then fled to Nan-Chao to escape punishment and was favoured with a job by Prince Leng-shwen. He soon rose to power and became the First Grand Secretary under the king. From that position he conspired to seize the throne and, when his insidious plans were completed, he one day murdered the infant prince by crushing his testicles. Then in order to remove all fears of possible revenge from the members of the ruling house this upstart hastily collected an armed band and fell upon the members of the Meng royal family and massacred as many of them as he could reach. Over eight hundred members of the ruling house thus fell under his sword beneath the "Five Glory Tower" in Ta-li-fu. This was the tragic end of the powerful Tai-Meng Dynasty of Nan-Chao and was the act of a treacherous Chinese officer who was generously given political asylum by the father of the murdered child. The throne then passed into the hands of the Chang family and the name of the kingdom was changed into Ta-Siang-Ho-Kuo. The new ruler built a temple at San-teh-su and decorated it with ten thousand Buddhas as a thanks-giving for success in exterminating the House of Meng. He died in 911 after reigning for eight years.

But a period of instability followed and a succession of usurpers founded a number of ephemeral dynasties

each changing the name of the kingdom after his family.

Thus there came into power in succession Chao-Shan-cheng (928-29), Yang-Kan-cheng (929-36), T'wan-Szu-ping (936-44) naming the kingdom as Ta-Tien-hing-kuo, Ta-Yi-Ning-kuo and Ta-li-kuo. Cheng-mai-su was succeeded by his son Ren-ming. In 913 he led an expedition against Sze-chuan, but the Chinese repulsed it inflicting heavy casualties on his army. He died of a most painful abscess formed in his ear in 926 and was succeeded by his son Long-tang at the age of twelve.

In 929 this boy king was murdered by General Yan-kan-cheng of Tong-C'wab under the influence of a mysterious happening. He placed on the throne one Chao-shan-chen who was born of a very poor family. But the General was displeased with the attitude of the new king. He murdered him after a reign of ten months and seized the throne for himself. His dynasty, which lasted only upto 937, was known as the Ta-i-ming dynasty. This usurper was an illegitimate son of Prince Leng-shwen of the Meng dynasty and was a native of Ping-C'wan-chow. He was an officer at Ten-C'wan-chow under Cheng-mai-su. As a ruler he was unsuccessful and was hated both by the officials and the people alike.

In 935 General T'wan-Szu-Ping (T'wan Sz-p'ing) of Teng-hai-hsien revolted against Yan-kan-cheng and defeated him in a battle. Yan-kan-cheng fled from the capital. General T'wan-Szu-Ping seized the throne and installed himself as the ruler of Nan-Chao. His dynasty is called Ta-li dynasty. According to Nan-Chao-Yeh-shih T'wan-Szu-Ping eventually succeeded in capturing the fugitive ex-king Yan-kan-cheng, but his life

was spared. Yan-kan-cheng entered a Buddhist monastery and lived the life of a monk.

The illustrious Tvan family was connected with the Meng family. Tvan-Sze-Ping (Tvan-Sze-p'ing) himself being probably a semi-Shan. The members of the Tvan family had held high civil and military posts for many generations under the Meng. The new Tvan family ruled over Ta-li-kuo till 1253 when it was destroyed by Kublai Khan. Fourteen kings of this family are mentioned in the Annals of Nan-Chao. Tvan-Szu-Ping ruled for eight years and died in 944. He was a devout Buddhist and made many temples and decorated them with brass Buddhas. Mr. Parker says "this is the beginning of the tributary State of Ta-li".⁷⁷ Scott is of the opinion that the Nan-Chao Empire now "split into two". At any rate "the country round Ta-li became more and more Chinese, while the western portion, which is no doubt the kingdom of Pong of the Manipur Chronicle and of the list of his conquests made by Anawra-hta, remained Shan and split up into a variety of States, possibly every now and again united under some energetic Sawbwa of one State or the other."⁷⁸ As captain Forbes suggests the Tai race, of which the Shans form a branch, had been gradually forced out of their original seat in Yun-nan by the advance of the Mongols under Kublai Khan from a date much earlier than the destruction of the Pagan monarchy. It was about this time that a portion of the race moving south formed the kingdom of Siam.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ GUBSE, I. I, p. 267.

⁷⁸ Ibid., pp. 267-68.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 268.

Twan-Szu-Ping was succeeded by his son Si-in in 944. His intensely religious bent of mind was unfitted to the management of the kingdom then in a turbulent state. After about a year's reign he renounced the throne and entered a Buddhist monastery.

Buddhism owed its predominance in Nan-Chao chiefly to the patronage and devotion received from the rulers of the Ta-li dynasty. It was during this period that the great Buddhist temples at San-ta-si were rebuilt on a magnificent scale. Nowadays, that immense site is covered with a great heap of ruins. But the Three Pagodas, which were restored and repaired by Prince Fong-yeh early in his reign, still stand in the area. The Great Pagoda is described to be "square and is built of huge bricks accurately cemented together. The base is 11 yards on each side. There are sixteen caves tapering from the tenth cave upto the pinnacle. At the top is a spiral staircase surmounted by a huge globe gilded with gold leaf. The sides are thickly plastered and are decorated with hundreds of niches containing small Buddhas. This Pagoda is about 300 feet high. After a walk through the ruins one comes to the remains of the large brass Kwan-in.⁸⁰ The head is missing. The trunk is six feet high, across the breast it is four feet and the arm stumps

⁸⁰ Sir Charles Eliot says: "Chinese Buddhist say Tara and Kuan-Yin (Kwan-in) are the same but the difference between them is this. Tara is an Indian and Lamaist goddess associated with Avalokita and in origin analogous to the Saktis of Tantrism. Kuan-Yin is a female form of Avalokita who can assume all shapes. The original Kuan-Yin was a male deity: male Kuan-Yins are not unknown in China and are said to be the rule in Korea". - Hinduism and Buddhism, vol. II, p. 17 (Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. London, 1954)

are one foot wide".⁸¹ Harvey says that the people of Nan-Chao built a monastery in A.D. 777 to Kuan-Yin, the Mahayanist goddess and the above may have been the one mentioned here. Prince Fong-yeh's reign was a turning point in the religious history of Ta-li or rather western Yun-nan, which was the central seat of the Ngai-Lao Shans. It was he who drove out for the first time the Taoist priests of his kingdom and espoused the cause of Buddhism and established numerous monasteries through which to propagate the new faith. Yun-nan-fu had been already under Buddhism for over two centuries and western Yun-nan must have known Buddhism much earlier than the ninth century A.D. Even in the first century B.C. some Buddhist missionaries are said to have come to Yun-nan from eastern India and preached their religion in that country and in the neighbouring areas. A Chinese scholar named Mou-ju advocated the Buddhism so introduced at that time and tried to show how it was superior to the ancient religion of the Chinese. A number of Princes then adopted Buddhism.⁸² Chavannes points out that the Ngai-Lao country in western Yun-nan was converted to Buddhism in the time of the Han (206 B.C.- A.D. 221)⁸³ But this earlier Buddhism of Nan-Chao probably died out for want of constant intercourse with India and the prevailing beliefs in the local non-Buddhist cults, such as the Dragon cult, continued to flourish. It appears therefore that Nan-Chao

81 M. Carthew ; *ibid.*, p. 31.

82 P. C. Bagchi : *Bharat O Chin*, (Visvamidyā Sangraha) p. 4.

83 JBRB, vol. XIX, Part II, p. 139.

received Buddhism earlier than China. It was Ko-lo-feng's enterprise that opened up the way, closed since A.D. 342, to the central seat of religion and culture of the Pyu country (Burma)⁸⁴ and onward to Magadha, and since the second quarter of the ninth century A.D. Buddhism had become the dominant religion of Nan-Chao.

Buddhism found its way to China as early as the first century A.D. It was Chang Chien^(or Chang Kien) who first brought the knowledge of Buddhism to China in 126 B.C. on his return from his travels through Central Asia then already under Buddhist influence. In the year A.D. 61 the Emperor Ming-Ti is said to have sent messengers to India to bring back Buddhist books and priests. At any rate, certain Buddhist missionaries were brought to the Chinese Imperial Court.⁸⁵ The first Indian missionaries, Kasyapa Matanga and Dharmaratna, who had visited China in the third quarter of the first century A.D., gathered around them a considerable following in the newly founded White Horse Monastery⁸⁶ in

⁸⁴ Pelliot, in *Deux Itinéraires* (pp.154-83), argues that the Thai of Nan-Chao received civilizing and Buddhist influences from India via the Piao of Burma.

⁸⁵ Max von Brandt: "The Ancient Faiths in China" in Harmsworth's *History of the World*, vol. II, p.729.

⁸⁶ The two monks Kasyapa Matanga and Dharmaratna rode on white horses and used them also for carrying the Buddhist scriptures and therefore the monastery was named White Horse Monastery. It is said that Kasyapa Matanga was a native of Central India. These monks went to China, then under the Emperor Ming-Ti (A.D. 58-76) of the Eastern Han, from the kingdom of the Ta Yueh-chih, the Yueh-chih being the Kushans. Another monk, named ChuFa-Lan, who came from Central Asia, also followed shortly. These monks were installed at Loyang, the capital of the Ming dynasty, in the White Horse Monastery. The journey was rendered safe as, in the meantime, the troublesome Hsiung-Nu had been crushed by Ming-Ti. In A.D. 67 Kasyapa Matanga translated into Chinese a Buddhist work called 'Dvicitvaringsat Vastu-Sutra'. It contains the fundamental sutras of Buddhism. Its ideas and precepts are Hinayanist. - Eliot: op.cit. vol. II. 1954 (London) 81.

the Chinese capital Loyang.⁸⁷ In the fourth century A.D. the Lu-Shan school of Buddhism was founded in the south of the Empire by Hui-yuan. This learned monk was born in A.D. 334 at Lou-fan, modern Tai-chou in North Shan-si. Lu-Shan was a solitary and picturesque mountain resort in Kiang-si. Hui-yuan, who had studied at Ch'ang-ngan, a famous Buddhist centre of learning in China, founded at Lu-Shan a school which he named the "school of White Lotus" (Po lien shu). Among his seventeen eminent Buddhist scholars there were two Indians, Buddhayasas of Kashmir and Buddhakadra of the Sakya clan. The Lu-Shan school was noted for introducing in China the cult of Amitabha.⁸⁸ Hui-yuan's disciples collected Buddhist manuscripts with Sanskrit texts in Central Asia and translated them into Chinese. This northern Buddhism of the Mahayana school, that spread down to the borders of Nan-Chao, must have penetrated into that country, but there is no evidence to show that it could make any great impression on the Ngai-Lao Shans before the end of the eighth century A.D. It was undoubtedly the conquest of Burma by Ko-lo-feng that opened the way to a fresh wave of Buddhism to enter Ta-li from the south-west, which brought about a Buddhist renaissance in that country. Subsequent expansion of the Nan-Chao empire to the south must have brought in also ideas of the Southern Canon. Ko-lo-feng's freindship with Tibet and the presence of Tibetans in his kingdom certainly facilitated interchange of ideas between the two countries and hence Tibetan Buddhism must have had a place

87 P.C. Bagchi : India and China, 1950, (Hind Kitabs Ltd.), p. 29.

88 Bagchi : op.cit., p. 99.

among the peoples of Nan-Chao. The monastery built and dedicated to Kwan-yin by the people of that country is a case in proof of it. About the Tibetan influence over Nan-Chao much is not known. But yet, as a nation, the Nan-Chao Tai were almost certainly following their racial religion upto this time, "worshipping", as Wood points out, "the beneficent spirits of the hills, forests, and waters, and propitiating numerous demons with sacrifices and offerings".⁸⁹ He further says that this simple faith survives in Siam to the present day, and in the north is still more truly the religion of the country people than is Buddhism. So also the Ahoms of Assam brought with them not Buddhism but their racial religion, may be with a slight admixture of Buddhistic influence.

Regarding the influence of Tibetan Buddhism it may be noted that Buddhism was established in Tibet as late as the middle of the seventh century A.D. under the patronage of Song-tsan Gampo, who was one of the greatest Tibetan kings. The introduction of Buddhism into Tibet is attributed to two Buddhist wives of Song-tsan Gampo - one, a Chinese princess named Wen-Ch'eng, given in marriage by the Emperor T'ai Tsung (A.D. 627-50) and the other, a Nepalese princess, named Bhirkuti Devi. But in Tibet Buddhism as such could not make much headway owing to the prevalence of local Shamanism. There evolved a new form of mixed Buddhism called Lamaism. It may be noted that the Buddhism, that was imported into Tibet and was fast growing between the seventh and the thirteenth century A.D.,

⁸⁹ W.A.R. Wood : A History of Siam, (T. Fisher Unwin Ltd., London), 1926, p. 39.

was essentially of the Tantric form which was taught in the universities of Nalanda and Vikramasila, particularly during the rule of the Pala kings of Bihar and Bengal. The Balaputra inscription characterises the Buddhist monks of Nalanda as Tantrika-bodhisattvas. Under the Palas, the Buddhist pantheon was "enriched by a host of new iconographical forms, mudras and postures, or asanas."⁹⁰ Hence the Tibetan form of Buddhism or Lamaism is described by David Macdonald as "a priestly mixture of Shamanist cult, Tantric mysticism, devil-worship and Indo-Tibetan demonolatry, touched here and there by the brighter lights of the teachings of Buddha".⁹¹

Nan-Chao undoubtedly derived some inspiration from Tibetan Buddhism. But the form, called Tantrayana, which accommodated many prevailing superstitions and mystic cults, was introduced into China by Vajrabodhi and widely popularised by his disciple Amoghavajra during the eighth and ninth centuries of the Christian era. Buddhism of this mixed form rapidly spread and exerted its dominant influence almost all over the Far East. It may be assumed that Nan-Chao was not free from the influence of this school though no definite information about it is available. The Ta-li dynasty had fourteen rulers holding the throne of Nan-Chao from A.D. 936 to 1236. These rulers were themselves devoted to Buddhism and built numerous Buddhist temples and monasteries in the kingdom for the promotion of that religion. They used to retire into a quiet monastic life after reigning for a period.

⁹⁰ "Indo-Nepalese Art in Tibet" by Dr. George Reorich in Stepping Stones, Kalingpong, vol. I, No. 3, p. 49.

⁹¹ His Tibet, 1945, p. 19.

In 978, during the reign of Prince Shi-shwen, peace was restored in Sze-chuan and the frontiers between China and Nan-Chao were finally fixed by the Emperor of China, who "laid his jade axe on the line made by the Ta-tu river and said that all the land beyond this river should remain under the rule of the Southern Princes of Nan-Chao". This was done in accordance with a map of Nan-Chao drawn by General Wang-chuan-pin after the settlement of peace with Nan-Chao and presented to the Emperor to fix the boundary.⁹² It appears that the Emperor renounced his claims to the disputed territories and settled the political frontiers to the satisfaction of the rulers of Nan-Chao. This settlement was followed by a long period of peace and friendly relations between the two countries extending over two centuries. Though there were occasional internal troubles, Nan-Chao used to get Chinese support against external enemies and rebellious vassal chiefs and the Nan-Chao Princes and nobles valued most the titles and honours conferred by the Emperor upon them. Rebellious Man-tai tribes, living near Annam under their Chief Beng-Kao, gave much trouble to Nan-Chao during the reign of Si-lien in the middle of the eleventh century A.D., but the latter quelled the rebellion with the assistance of the Chinese.

This period of political security from external danger was marked by considerable degree of material and cultural progress in Nan-Chao. Prince Chen-shwen (A.D. 1097-1109) of the Latter or Second Ta-li dynasty introduced notable reforms in the

92 Carthew : ibid., pp. 3;-32.

administration including abolition of the old corvee system. He also built a city at T'su-hsiang-fu. In 1104 he sent Kao-tai-uien to the Emperor Tseng-ming with despatches and eighty gold spear-heads to be offered to him as a présent. He further sent a list of Nan-Chao families to the Emperor with recommendations for conferment of imperial honours. Burma and two other States sent to Chen-shwen tributes which included elephants and spices.⁹³ The next ruler Prince Ho-U (A.D. 1109-1148) used to receive tributes from a number of adjacent principalities. The tributes were in gold, silver, precious stones, elephants, rhinoceros together with thousands of horses and heads of cattle.⁹⁴

The Man-tai tribes again rebelled against Nan-Chao, but were subdued by Kao-tai-ming, the Grand Secretary of State and Chief Counsellor. In the beginning of the thirteenth century A.D. Nan-Chao rose to be one of the most powerful kingdoms of East Asia developing an excellent administrative system with many brilliant men in the management of the affairs of the State. It was also a period of good relations between China and Nan-Chao. Kao-tai-ming received imperial title for his meritorious works. Ho-U's reign was followed by a more or less stable government under two other kings who succeeded him. Then came the reign of Prince Ci-hsiang (A.D. 1201-39) which was remarkable for all round peace and progress in the kingdom and for some of the finest talents ever produced in that country. In 1239 this Prince abdicated in favour of his son Hsian-hsin, himself retiring to monastic life.

93 Carthew : ibid., p. 34.

94 Ibid. p. 34.

The critical period of Nan-Chao began in the reign of Prince Hsian-hsin. The Mongol hordes under Mangu Khan and Kublai Khan swept down on the frontiers of Nan-Chao in 1245 from the vantage point of Sze-chuan, which had for about a decade been made a part of the Mongol dominion. Kublai Khan⁹⁵ was the brother of the Mongol Emperor Mangu Khan.⁹⁶ In this campaign Kublai Khan was assisted by his very able Generals, Wu and Ho. For reaching Nan-Chao the Mongol army had to undertake a strenuous march over a distance of 2,000 li (about 667 English miles), much of which lay across the mountainous country of Eastern Tibet and numerous rivers and marshy tracts. Prince Hsian-hsin sent General Kao-he to oppose Kublai Khan near the River of Golden Sand⁹⁷ but he was killed in the battle that took place between the two armies. It is said that it took a few months for the army to arrive at the borders of Ta-li. It could advance no farther owing to the impassable condition of the roads and rivers caused by continuous rain.

In the meantime Prince Hsian-hsin had died in 1252 and his son Twan-shing-shih (or Twan Hsin-ei or Hsin-ei) ascended the throne. He was the last king of Ta-li-kuo. From

95 Properly Hu-pe-Lei or Ku-pe-Lei from which some modern writers express it as Khubilai or Kublai.

96 Called in the Mongol dialect Kha Khan or Grand Khan or Emperor.

97 The Mekong. The Chinese name of the river is Lan-tsang Shui. There is golden sand in its bed which the Ngai-Lao wash and melt and 'so make gold'. It has also holes or bright pearls and has amber (hu-p'o) native in the soil.- "The Tan and the Ngai-Lao" in JBRs, vol. XIV, Part II, p. 114.

the skirts of Ta-li Kublai Khan sent three of his officers to him to demand his submission to the Mongol Emperor. Prince Shing-shih foolishly put these officers to death and sent troops to oppose the Mongols. Man-tsi forces were to join the Ta-li army to strengthen the defence, but they did not arrive in time. Prince Shing-shih's army was defeated by the Mongols and the city of Shang Kwan to the north of Ta-li captured. Unable to stand against the invading army, which was numerically superior, Prince Shing-shih fled to Yun-nan-fu leaving his General Kao-fai-chang with a small force to defend the city of Ta-li. The General gallantly fought against the Mongols till he was mortally wounded and fell beneath the Great Tower. With his dying breath the General cried : "Alas ! the House of Twan has come to an end, though members of that House still live. Thus ends the Kingdom of Nan-Chao".⁹⁸ The story goes that as he died black clouds gathered and heavy peals of thunder shook the sky. Kublai Khan heard this and said : "Behold ! A loyal and devoted minister died".⁹⁹ The survivors to the Nan-Chao garrison fought bravely till they were exhausted and had to surrender on January 7th, 1253.^{99a}

The widow and the two sons of the deceased General were then brought before Kublai Khan, who being moved with pity spared their lives saying "Behold the widow and sons of a most faithful and brave soldier. Take good care of them

⁹⁸ Carthew : ibid., p. 37.

⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 37.

^{99a} JSS, vol. XLVI Part 2, 1908, p. 125.

and when the boys are old enough give them a position in the Government". It may be mentioned that Kublai Khan's character came under the sobering influence of Buddhism which he adopted as a national religion of China. His Buddhism was of the Tibetan form.¹⁰⁰ During his reign a mass of Tibetan Buddhist literature was translated into the Mongolian language. He made himself more a Chinese than a Mongol and ruled with moderation. In religion, he was tolerant though he disliked the Taoists, and treated his subjects with humanity.

After the fall of Ta-li in 1253 Kublai Khan captured the other important cities in western Yun-nan and received the submission of the Man-tsi tribes. He next sent Generals Hu and Ho in the same year to conquer the second capital Yun-nan-fu. At Yun-nan-fu, with the fall of the city, they captured the fugitive king Shing-shih. Kublai Khan, however, forgave the captured king and made him a provincial Governor in Nan-Chao. Shing-shih, the last ruling Prince of Nan-Chao, died in A.D. 1260 on his journey to the Court of the Mongol Emperor after having held his hereditary office of Governor

¹⁰⁰ He appointed a Tibetan Buddhist scholar named Phagspa, whom he had brought to his Court, to the office of Kuo-Ssu or Preceptor of the State to administer the religious affairs of the whole country. He declared Lamaism as a national religion of China. From Emperor Kublai Khan Phagspa received the title of Ta Pao Fa Wang or Prince of the Great and Precious Law of Buddha and also an imperial decree to invent a script for the Mongolian language. - vide Dr. Chou Hsiang-Kuang : The History of Chinese Buddhism, (Indo-Chinese Literature Publications, Allahabad-2, India), 1956, pp.179-80.

for seven years, Kublai Khan died at the ripe old age of eighty. Successive Mongol-Chinese Emperors appointed the members of the T'ang royal family of Ta-li as hereditary Governors. Ta-li was placed under Generals Hu and Ho and Kublai Khan founded the Yuan dynasty of China in 1253 with his capital at Khan Baligh (or City of the King), now Peking (Peiping).¹⁰¹ Thus ended the Tai empire of Nan-Chao in South China.

Administrative System of Nan-Chao :-

The external relations of Nan-Chao, except for a few reigns of strong monarchs, was governed by the Chinese conception of imperialism, according to which the Emperor of China could have no equal on earth. The Emperor was supreme over all other rulers of the known world, though, in fact, he could exercise suzerainty only over the East Asian countries outside India, Japan and probably, for a long period, also Tibet. Nan-Chao, because of her peculiar geographical position, had to acknowledge this suzerainty and pay tribute to China periodically. Her embassies and sometimes the ruling Prince himself used to visit the imperial Court in recognition of the overlordship of Chinese Emperor. In the usual course the Emperor would appoint a Resident at the capital of Nan-Chao whose duty was to keep the imperial government informed of the state of affairs in that kingdom and, where necessary, to advise its rulers on matters of high policy. ~~Resident~~ Prefects were appointed by the imperial government to manage or supervise and report on the affairs

¹⁰¹ L. Hoontrakul : op.cit., p.97 ; Carthew : ibid., p.38 ; Harold Lamb : Genghis Khan, (Bantam Books, New York), 1953, p.130 ; Latourette : op.cit., p.269.

of the vassal States of the Tai country of Yun-nan and Szechuan before the emergence of the powerful kingdom of Nan-Chao. In his capacity as the overlord the Emperor also conferred on the Princes and nobles of Nan-Chao imperial honorific titles and seals and sometimes appointed the members of the royal family as Governors and Generals under the imperial government.

Nan-Chao was a kind of oriental monarchy in which there was a Council of Ministers to advise and assist the king. The functions of the Ministers were both civil and military. Important military officers were often appointed as Ministers by the king for consultation and guidance in the formulation of State policy. The kingship was hereditary. The First Grand Secretary of State is a dignitary, probably next in rank to the king. We know for the first time from Parker's translations of Teng-yueh Annals that 'There were Ministers of State, censors, or examiners, generals, record officers, chamberlains, judges, treasurers, aediles,¹⁰² ministers of commerce etc., and the native word for each department was Shwang. Minor officials managed the granaries, stables, taxes, etc., and the military organisation was by tens, centurions, chiliarchs, deca-chiliarchs, and so on. Military service was compulsory for all able-bodied men, who drew lots for each levy. Each soldier was supplied with a leather coat and a pair of trousers. There were four distinct army corps or divisions, each having its own standard. The king's body-guard were called

¹⁰² Comparable to Roman magistrates superintending public works, shows etc.

chu-nu kassa, and we are told that kassa or katsu meant leather belt. The men wore chuti, helmets, and carried shields of rhinoceros hide. The centurions were called Lo-tsa-tsz.¹⁰³ Scott remarks that these names, if they really were Shan and not Chinese inventions, have been lost since the Shans ceased to be a conquering power. Parker has further pointed out that 'some of the best cavalry soldiers were of the Wang-tsa tribe, west of the Mekhong. The women of this tribe fought too, and the helmets of the Wang-tsa were studded with cowries.'¹⁰⁴ It is not known who these Wang-tsa tribesmen were, so distinguished in the past by their martial qualities. Parker thought that they were the Wa people, but the modern Wa do not rear horses or ponies for they look upon them as highly dangerous animals.

'There were six metropolitan departments and provincial viceroys in the kingdom. The barbarian word for department was Kien.¹⁰⁵ Of such departments the most important were Peh-ngai,¹⁰⁶ Meng-she¹⁰⁷ and Tai-ho (Ta-li-fu).¹⁰⁸ When the King

¹⁰³ George Scott : "Shan Buddhism" in JRAS, 1912, pp. 487-90 : GUBSS, I.I, 1900 by Scott and Hardiman, p.263.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 263.

¹⁰⁵ "Keng of present times, which in Leo, Shan and Siamese becomes Chieng and along the Mekhong is frequently pronounced and sometimes written, sieng, whence the French form xieng. The Burmese transformed it into kyaing. The forms kaing and kiang are freaks of the British military officers and of railway promoters. The word may be compared with the Wa ken, meaning a circle, or community of villages under one chief, as Ken Tau and Wa Pet Ken, beyond the Nam Hka." - ibid., p. 263.

¹⁰⁶ The capital of the King of Tien or Yun-nan - ibid., p. 264.

¹⁰⁷ Meng-she, Mong-she, Mong Se or Hsen-hse refers to the same place, namely Yun-nan-Sen - ibid., p. 224, and also Milne and Cochrane : Shans at Home, p.7. According to Parker Meng-she was the ancient seat of the Meng (Mung) family of Nan-Chao rulers. This is, he says, doubtless the modern Mangshi, called by the Shans Mong-Hkawm. Further Meng is doubtless the Shan Mong, a state or fortified town - GUBSS, I.I, 1900, p. 264.

sallied forth, eight white-scallopped standards of greyish purple were carried before him; two feather fans, a chowry, an axe, and a parasol of king-fishers' feathers having a red bag. The Queen-mother's standards were scallopped with brown instead of white. She was called Sin-Mo or Kin-mo, and the Queen-wife was called Tain-wu.¹⁰⁹ The chief wife of a Sawbwa of the later period was, under the Indian Buddhist influence, called Maha Devi.

Nan-Chao was organized on a feudal basis. The kingdom under Ko-lo-feng developed into an empire in the middle of the eighth century A.D. with the extension of its sway from Magadha on the west to Kwei-chow and Kwang-si frontiers on the east and from Tibet on the north, to the borders of Tongking on the south. The empire farther extended during the reigns of his successors and included Tongking with Hanoi. The local ruling Chiefs within the dominions of Nan-Chao acknowledged her overlordship and paid tributes to her king. Nan-Chao had only two most powerful rivals, namely, China and Tibet. In the middle of the eleventh century A.D. the Pagan Empire of Burma arose as a third potential rival. Surrounded by these powerful kingdoms Nan-Chao held her sovereignty as much by diplomacy as by her military prowess. The balance of power depended on their alliances with each other against the most powerful and troublesome amongst them. But China was generally holding a predominant position commanding respect and receiving homage from most of the East Asian countries including Nan-Chao. The political impact of the Mongols wiped out finally from the

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 264.

scene the great Tai kingdom of Nan-Chao and with it ended the age-long struggle for power between China and Nan-Chao.

The extant records of old throw some light on the economic and social system of the kingdom of Nan-Chao. Land was apportioned to each family according to rank ; superior officials receiving forty shwang¹¹⁰ or acres. This method of distribution of land survives, we are told by Wood, in Siam to the present day, in the nominal sakdi na grade conferred upon officials.¹¹¹ Every Prince, official, and private person, had a certain amount of land allotted to him. For instance, the Chao P'ias, or P'ias, holding important posts, were allowed to hold from 1,000 to 4,000 acres. Subordinate officials, such as K'uns and Luangs, held from 160 acres upwards. Common people held 100 acres.¹¹² The Ahoms of Assam had a similar system which will be described elsewhere. The people knew the arts of weaving cotton, silk and woollen and reared silk-worms. The salt wells of K'unming (Yun-nan-fu) were free to the people. West of Yung-ch'ang a kind of mulberry grew from the wood of which bowls were made. Gold was found in many parts of the country, both in the sands and in the mountains. The Mekong river in the north was noted for the presence of alluvial gold. West of Momien (T'eng-Yueh) the race of horses was particularly good. People of all ranks, including the nobles, engaged themselves in agricultural work. It is

¹¹⁰ The tone of this word is different from the tone of the first-mentioned word shwang meaning a department of the government.

¹¹¹ History of Siam : (T. Fisher Unwin Ltd., London), 1926, p. 37.

¹¹² Ibid., p. 85.

interesting to note that it took three men to drive an ox-plough : one led, one drove, and the third poked up the animal. As mentioned, the old corvee system was abolished, but each man paid a tax of two measures of rice a year.

As a special mark of honour, the chief dignitaries wore a kimpolo, or a coat of tiger-skin comparable to the modern fur-coat. The women's hair was gathered into two locks and plaited into a chignon. Their ears were ornamented with pearls, green-stone, and amber. It is said that female morals were easy previous to marriage, but after marriage one has to suffer even death penalty for adultery.¹¹³

In the T'ang dynastic history a list of the kings of what it calls the Royal Family of Meng is inserted. In this royal nomenclature the last syllable of the father's name forms the first of the son's, and this is so in the case of the fourteen Meng family Princes of Nan-Chao,¹¹⁴ who ruled

¹¹³ Ibid., p. 264.

¹¹⁴ Hsi-nu-lo (649-74), Lo-sheng (674-712), She-lo-pi (712-28), P'i-lo-ko (728-48), Ko-lo-feng (748-78), Feng-ch'ieh-i (died young), I-mou-hsun (778-808), Hsun-ko-ch'uan (808-9), Ch'uan-lung-sheng (809-16), Ch'uan-li (816-24), Ch'uan-feng-yu (824-59). The last three rulers are brothers. Shih-lung (859-77). This Prince's mother was not of the blood-royal, but a fisherman's daughter of exquisite beauty. Lung-shun (877-97), Shun-hua-chen (897-902). The above list of Princes is from Harvey's History of Burma, 1925, (Longmans, Green and Co., Calcutta), pp. 311-13. The dates, he says, are well substantiated by Chinese records. When compared with other records a slight difference of a year or so is sometimes noticed.

The following are the Rulers of Pagan before 1044 according to the Burmese Chronicles (The Hmannan Yazawin, Mandalay, 1908) with dates which are unsubstantiated : 1. Pyusawti (167-242), 2. Timinyi (242-99), 3. Yimminpaik (299-324), 4. Paikthili (324-44), 5. Thinlikyang (344-87) and 6. Kyaungdurit (387-412). - vide Harvey : op.cit., pp. 311-13 ; Hall : A History of South-east Asia, (Macmillan), 1955, Appendix, p. 730.

from A.D. 649 to 903. In the early Pagan dynastic list also a similar practice in naming the Princes is noticed. From this Harvey remarks that the 'identity system' indicates a common origin of the two royal families.¹¹⁵ But Scott rightly observes that this idea of hereditary syllables, as found in the Chinese writings, seems to be purely fanciful, or an invention of the Chinese mind, devoted to ancestral worship. In modern days the Shan takes his name on much the same system as the Burman, without any reference to the name of his father, and in any case the Sawbwas are always known by a title, assumed after their accession.¹¹⁶ The naming system also depends on the prevailing linguistic or cultural influence. It does not necessarily signify a common origin or a community of race. In spite of racial differences such cultural similarity is possible among peoples living long in a common environment. The case of the Ahoms in Assam, who belong to the Tai race but have lived long in an environment of Sanskritised Assamese culture adopting and promoting it, can be cited as an example in this regard.

That the Tai were a literary people from before the rise of the Ch'in Empire in the middle of the third century B.C. is proved by the records of ruthless persecution of the Tai literati by Shih-Wang-Ti, who also destroyed most of their books. Yet, after a long period of struggle with the Chinese imperialists, they reappeared as a ruling race in the kingdom of Nan-Chao and settled down to social and economic

115 Harvey : op.cit., pp. 312-13.

116 GUBSS, 1.1, 1900, pp. 264-65.

reconstruction and also to literary pursuits. As already mentioned above, I-mou-hsun entered into an agreement with China when Tibet threatened Nan-Chao and four copies of a treaty were made. W.W. Cochrane wrote to a distinguished archaeologist asking in what languages and alphabets these copies of the treaty were presumably written and got the reply that they were written in Oighur, Chinese, Tibetan, and Shan (Tai) respectively,¹¹⁷ though the script might be one common to the Chinese and the Tai or to all. Of course, no proof whatever of the statement was given. Perhaps no old record was at the time available containing the texts of the treaty or any reference to the languages and alphabets of the same. Yet, in view of the advancement made by the race in Nan-Chao, it would be wrong to presume that the Tai of that country were illiterate. It should be remembered that it is known on good authority that the Chinese annalists speak of the Ngai-lao kingdom as being quite a reasonable approximation to their own civilization.¹¹⁸ The Chinese had the habit of referring to the Nan-Chao Tai as barbarians. But 'we need not attach', remarks Wood, 'much meaning to this expression. They called all foreigners barbarians down to a very recent date.'¹¹⁹

117 "Shan and Buddhism of the Northern Canon" by Cochrane in JRAS, 1912, pp. 487-90.

118 Ibid.

119 W.A.R. Wood : A History of Siam, 1933, pp. 36-38.

CHAPTER IV
THE MAO-SHAN EMPIRE

The Tai are believed to have migrated to Burma from the sixth century B.C., or probably from an earlier date, from the region of South-west China. The ancient Chronicles of the Shans and the Burmese contain succinct accounts of early Tai settlements in what is now called the Shan States of Burma. The Tai communities, at that early time, penetrated along the tributaries of the Irrawaddy into the plains of Upper Burma as peaceful immigrants in search of safe and fertile areas to settle down ; but, at times, they also came in great strength as raiding hordes from a central consolidated position somewhere in Yun-nan and, where possible, founded their principalities by subjugating the local tribes.

The first remarkable development of Tai power, that of the Mao-Shans, in the valley of the Mekong and Upper Burma, took place in the sixth century A.D. under the leadership of two Tai Princes named Hkun-Long and Hkun-Lai. They annexed vast tracts of territory in Upper Burma driving out the ancient ruling dynasty of Indian origin to the west and subjugating the local tribes. It was followed in the eighth and the thirteenth centuries respectively by a regular expansion of the Tai dominions in Burma and Assam. This the steadily growing pressure of the Tai from the north-east of Burma gradually drove, in successive periods, the Pyu, the Burmans, the Kachins and other tribes, inhabiting or ruling in that

part of the country, to the south and the west. It may also be noted, if the legendary accounts of the early times now available in fragments, can be relied upon in any degree, that the rich valley of the Irrawaddy was also a meeting ground of invading forces from both India and China in the first millennium B.C. ; but, in the later period the danger from India ceased, almost the whole of northern and eastern Burma having come under the rule of the Tai. On the other hand, being dislodged from the north, the Burmans successively consolidated themselves in the central and southern parts of the Irrawaddy and the Sittang valleys, while the Mons ruled farther south in the region of Lower Burma called Raman'n'adesa.

Though in the old records of the Burmese there are references to the irruptions and movements of peoples, said to be Tai, from Yun-nan into Burma, they are too insufficient and fragmentary to be used for the construction of a well-knit history. Of such movements the one noted by Dr. Cushing is of immense political importance. He points out that the sixth century of the Christian era saw a great wave of Tai migration descending from the mountains of southern Yun-nan into the Nam-Mao (the Shweli river) valley and the adjacent regions. Compared with the earlier ones the strength of the migration wave of this century was such that it converted almost the whole of the Shweli valley down to the Irrawaddy into a consolidated seat of Tai political power for the first time in the history of Burma. It was from this area that the Tai spread out to the north, west and south-east. Thus not

only the Shweli valley itself but the whole expanse of territory between the Mekong and the Irrawaddy covering the present Shan States of Burma came under the control of the branch of the Tai called Mao-Shan. Thus there arose at this time a number of Tai States, such as Hsen-wi, Mong-mit and Bhamo in the valleys of the Shweli and the Tapeng. Northwards, these Tai reached upto the Upper Chindwin and Hukawag valleys and westward the Shwebo district. In the south-east, these people enormously increased the strength of the earlier settlers of their stock in the region of the present Shan States of Burma. Those, who proceeded to the north, consolidated their position in the area of Mogaung (Shan : Mong-Kawng) and Mohnyin (Mong-Yang).

The last greatest migration of the Tai to Upper Burma and the Menam valley of the modern Thailand was caused by the advance of Kublai Khan, with his Mongol hordes, right down to the heart of western Yun-nan in the middle of the thirteenth century. At this time the northward advance of the branch of the Tai, called the Mao-Shan, under the leadership of Prince Hso-Ka-Hpa (*ṣṣṣṣṣṣ*), had already reached the Brahmaputra valley in Eastern Assam¹ by crossing the Patkai range and conquered a strong foothold in this new country and founded what is called in Assam the Ahom dynasty. In a few centuries the whole of the Brahmaputra valley and once upto the Karatoya river to the west of Assam came under the Ahom rule.

Thus the history and political development of the Tai in Burma and Assam can be conveniently divided into three periods : (1) The Early Period, (2) The Early Medieval Period and (3) The Later Medieval Period.

1 Called Waisali-Long by the Shans and the Burmese

When exactly the Tai first crossed the frontiers of south-west China and entered the Irrawaddy valley of Burma is not definitely known. The earliest references in the Burmese Chronicles were to an irruption of the "Tarops and Tarets² into Burma from the Sein country in the kingdom of Gandhala"³ in the sixth century B.C. This irruption took place about 523 B.C. according to the Burmese era⁴ and is pointed out as the first entrance of the Tai⁵ into Burma from Yun-nan.⁶ Who were the people of Burma at that time to be affected by the invasion of the Tarops and Tarets? From the extant records it is known that the Pyu were the earliest inhabitants of Burma with their central seats in Shwebo and Prome. The Pyu were still there in Burma as a subject people of I-mou-hsun (778-808), who, on concluding peace with China, sent a troupe of Pyu musicians to the Chinese Court.⁷ Hence the Pyu, who might have flourished in the early period as the dominant race in Upper Burma, must have been reduced to subjection by the early Indian rulers of the Sakya clan and later pressed westward by the irruptions of the Shan-Tayoks from Yun-nan.

² Sir Arthur Phayre says the Manchus are called Taret by the Burmese, but Parker doubts the fact and demands his authority. - GUBSS, I.I, 1900, p.190. It seems Tarets were Karens, the people of the ancient Teru State in China.

³ Gandhala was Gandhara which name was applied to Yun-nan by the Buddhists.

⁴ Or 519 B.C. according to the Shan Chronicles.

⁵ Called in Burma Shan-Tayoks (from Shan-Taroks or Shan-Tarops).

⁶ "Tagaung Chronicle" as quoted in the Glass Palace Chronicle, (Oxford University Press, 1923), by Pe Maung Tin and L.H. Luce, pp. 2-3.

⁷ Hall : Burma, 1950 (Hutchinson), pp. 8-9.

It is mentioned in the dynastic records of Burma that princes of the Sakya dynasty of northern India ruled in Upper Burma both before and after Buddha. Tagaung Yazawin says that the first Sakya Prince to enter Burma with his army was Abhi Raja of Kapilavatthu (Kapilavastu or the Middle Kingdom) as early as 923 B.C., that is, about 360 years before the birth of Gautama the Buddha. He went by way of Arakan and founded, for the first time, a kingdom called Sangasserattha in the Tagaung⁸ country of Burma. The capital was established in the site of the old Pagan, called Kambuja Thintawe or simply Chindwe on the left bank of the Irrawaddy. According to Hall the date of foundation of Tagaung in the Burmese Chronicles corresponds to 850 B.C. and the stories these Chronicles tell are copies of Indian legends taken from Sanskrit or Pali originals.⁹ It seems Abhi Raja's connection with his own country ceased and he merged himself with the local population. His two sons are known by their Burmanized names of Kan Rajahgyi and Kan Rajahnge. He carried to Burma the pre-Buddhist culture and tradition of the Sakyas, then a people of the sub-Himalayan tract of North India, but whose original habitat was probably at Sakya in Southern Tibet to the north of Sikkim. It is very doubtful whether the Aryan rule at all extended over that part of the country in that early period, though, of course, the impact of Vedic culture must have been felt by the peoples living in the Gangetic valley.

⁸ Tagaung is the Burmanized form of Tung Kawng of the Shans. - Elias : op.cit., p.13.

⁹ Hall : Burma, 1950, p.1.

It may be noted that the Sakyas¹⁰ and the Lichhavis¹¹ were allied clans and the latter "undoubtedly belong to the Mongolian race".¹² In the inscription by Jayadeva, the Lichhavi king of Nepal, dated A.D. 759, the Lichhavi kings are given a legendary pedigree connecting them with the solar line, Lichhavi being eighth in descent from Dasaratha the father of Rama. The Himalayan peoples the Khasas, the Lichhavis and the Sakyas were included within Aryanism at a later date and even a Lichhavi princess was the mother of the Gupta line of emperors of India. Hence they were treated as Ksatriyas, rather as Vratya Ksatriyas by the Brahmins.¹³

The thirty-third descendant of the Sakya line of Princes of old Pagan or Tagaung was Binnaka Raja,¹⁴ a contemporary of Gautama the Buddha. During his reign and about the commencement of the Buddhist era the Tayoks (Tarops) from Gandhara¹⁵ (Yun-nan) invaded his country about the date mentioned above, captured Tagaung, destroyed it and compelled the Raja to quit the country. The Raja and his family, with their followers, entered the Mali stream and took refuge at Male on the right bank of the Irrawaddy and nearly opposite the present ruins of Lower Sabenago (Champa Nagara). The Tayoks could be no other than the Tai, the ancestors of the so-called Shans of Burma, who had been predominant in South-west China until

¹⁰ The Sakyas were rulers of Kapilavattin.

¹¹ The Lichhavis (Licchavis or Nicchavis), a Himalayan clan of North Bihar and Nepal, were rulers of Vaisali.

¹² C.V. Vaidya : History of Mediaeval Hindu India, vol. i, p. 377 : "Notes : (1) Lichhavis".

¹³ Ibid., pp. 369, 377 ; also Manu, X, 22.

¹⁴ Possibly Skr. Binaka ; The Shan Peng Naka of the Ong Pawng Hsi-Paw Chronicle.

¹⁵ Skr. Gandhara.

Kublai Khan conquered Yun-nan (Nan-Chao) in the middle of the thirteenth century A.D. Even in the eleventh century A.D. Yun-nan was called Tayok (Tarop) country. For, when the Tai kingdom of Nan-Chao (Yun-nan) was under the rule of the Ta-li dynasty, the Pagan monarch Anawrahta visited that country in A.D. 1047 and this fact is referred to in the Burmese Chronicles as his journey to "the Tarop country of the kingdom of Gandhala" to ask for the holy Buddha tooth which was known to be in possession of the Tarop Utibwa.¹⁶ The Utibwa, mentioned here, appears to be Prince Si-lien (1045-76) of Nan-Chao, who ruled for thirty-one years, defeated and beheaded the Man-tsi leader Beng-Kao and then became a Buddhist monk abdicating the throne in favour of his son Lien-i.

It is known from the Lao and Siamese sources that there was in the early sixth century B.C. a great migration of Tai and other non-Chinese populations from South China to the central regions of the Indo-Chinese Peninsula partly due to Chinese pressure and partly from internal dissensions among them. The Ngai-Lao, who spread to the south in considerable masses from their home in Yun-nan, built a number of important cities in the areas of their new settlement. Thus the cities of Mong-Lam and Chieng-Rang in Yun-nan, Chieng-Tung¹⁷ in Burma and Chieng-Sen in Siam sprang up during this

¹⁶ G.P. Chronicle, pp. 80-83.

¹⁷ Officially spelt as Keng-tung.

time. The local Tai Annals say that all these areas were liberated by the Ngai-Lao from the Karen rule in the year 543 B.C., but the Burmese used to call the Ngai-Lao or the Shans, who inhabited the country to the east of the Salween, as Yun Shans.

The Mong-Mao State, destined to attain great fame and prosperity in later times, was founded in what is now the most westerly section of Yun-nan well before the middle of the sixth century B.C. For many centuries Mong-Mao remained in obscurity until it reappeared under the Mao-Shans in the sixth century A.D. The kingdom of Mong-Mao reached the zenith of its power in the thirteenth century with her greatest territorial expansion under Hso-Hkan-Hpa, the Great.

In about two centuries of time since the sixth century B.C. a number of Shan States with their capital towns sprang up in Burma. Thus the Shan Chronicles, quoted by Ney Elias, mention that the city of Monei (Mone or Mong-Nai) in 441 B.C. and Hsi Paw (Burmese Thibo) in 423 B.C. The most striking fact is that even after a lapse of about 2,300 years now all the above States between the Irrawaddy and the Salween and its eastern neighbourhood have continued to remain predominantly Tai to this day.

A brief acquaintance with the history of these three very important States of early times is necessary here. The classical name for the State of Monei, which is to the south of the other two, was Kamboja. In Yule's map of Burma the name Konanda is given for the present town of Monei.

According to Hallett Kamboja includes all the Shan States on the tableland between the Irrawaddy and the Salween.¹⁸ Ney Elias reports from Burmese sources that the original city of Monei was founded in the year 24 of religion or 519 B.C. by

Nga-Chau-Kyo, who was succeeded by the Sawbwas of his line as independent rulers. But in about A.D. 1223 the famous Mao-Shan General Sam-Long-Hpa conquered the State and placed a Prince of the Mong-Mit branch of the Shan rulers as a feudatory to Mong-Mao. Thus the Mong-Mit line supplanted the old independent Sawbwas. Monei, before its subjection to the Mao-Shans, exercised sway over a number of States, such as Nyaung-

Yuei, Mobyai, Yauksauk, Legya, Tigyt, Kyaing-Taung, Maing-Seik, and sometimes the Mre-Lap Shans in the present Southern Shan States. Most of these areas are now difficult to identify. The tract of the Mre-Lap Shans was neither absolutely under the Burmese, nor entirely under the Shans, but lay more or less south-east of Ava from the neighbourhood of Myin Gyan on the west to the Nittik Hills on the east. It is said that the more easterly-hilly portions were the abode of a Demon race, called the Gungs or Guens, who probably practised cannibalism. The Demon Chief, who, according to the legend, lived in a town called Kinlay, about a mile north-west of the Nittik pass, was driven away eastward to Keng-Tung by Anawrahta.¹⁹

¹⁸ Hallett : ibid., p. 333. It may be remembered that Kamboja or Kamboja-desa means Cambodia.

¹⁹ Ney Elias : Introductory Sketch of the History of the Shans in Upper Burma and Western Yunnan, (Calcutta, Foreign Department Press), 1876, pp. 54-55.

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Mong Hsen-Wi²⁰ of the Shans is called Theinni by the Burmese and Mu-pang by the Chinese. Hsen-Wi Chronicles contain dynastic history of the Tai ruling families in Burma beginning from the Burmese Era 92 A.D. 730. These Chronicles give no account of the earlier period. All that could be gathered about the earlier history of this State was obtained partly from what the natives related to Ney Elias and partly from a Burmese work called the Zabu-Oke-Saung. According to these sources Hsen-Wi was founded in 441 B.C. by a native Shan named Kinta-Ho-Hung, who also became the first King of that State. He fortified the capital city with strong walls the traces of which remain to this day. As Ney Elias puts it "shortly afterwards, on the 4th day of the 2nd moon of the 102nd year of Religion (B.C. 441) he began to build a wall to surround the city, the form of which was a square of 1345 ta,²¹ the height was ten cubits above the ground and 2 cubits below ground; the thickness 10½ cubits; outside the wall, was constructed a moat 5 ta broad and 20 cubits deep, while between the wall and the moat a space was left of 3 ta in breath. There were 11 gates in the wall each

20 According to Hsen Wi Chronicle, first translated and incorporated in the Gazetteer of Upper Burma and the Shan States (Part I, vol. I, Rangoon, 1900, pp. 227-257) "the name Hsen Wi is derived from wi, the bunches of plantains grown in the garden of the two aged cultivators of Man Sa near the Naung Put, the parents of Tung Hkan, and has been in use ever since in the form Hsen Wi Hsi Hso, Hsen Wi Hso-an-wu, Hso-an-hpu, Hso-patu, Hsomo Kawsampi, the country of white blossoms in the province of Siriwilata Maha Kambawsa Sengui Kawsampi." - Ibid., p. 230.

21 The ta consists of seven cubits, as noted by Elias and the cubit is generally taken at eighteen English inches. Hallett seems to have summarised Ney Elias's description of this wall according to English measurement in his Historical Sketch of the Shans, in Amongst the Shans by Colquhoun at p. 335. Even to-day a measuring pole called tar, eight cubits in length, is used in Eastern India, particularly in Assam, to measure

8 cubits wide, but the material of which the wall was constructed is not mentioned.²² But from the description it may be assumed that the wall was made of either stone or brick. It is said that at a distance of ten days' journey to the south of the city there was a stone post erected to mark the southern limit of the kingdom just across which one enters the State of Monei. Its position was five daings or about ten miles due south of the village of Man-thaw. The description given above presents to us the picture of what was a walled city of the Shans in ancient times. Similar cities built by them, whether in Burma or Assam in mediaeval times, appear to have been essentially of this model. Hsen-Wi was a fairly big State extending from the Kenei-hill near the Shweli opposite Mong-Mao on the north to the border of monei on the south and from the eastern limits of Hsi-Paw on the west to the river Salween on the east. But Kinta-Ho-Hung's dynasty came to an end after about one hundred and seventeen years of rule from the date of its foundation, when, in 324 B.C., an Indian Prince, named Chandravansa, said to be a brother of Asoka's principal queen Asandimitra, took possession of the country and founded a new dynasty.²³ He transferred his capital to a new site which he fortified with a structure made of bricks. The palace was built within the walls with a gilt tower (pya-that) and, when the Chinese came to know of this tower, they called the capital "the golden palace city" (shue-huan-mye). Chandravansa's reign is important for the introduction of Buddhism into Hsen-Wi. Asoka's son Mahendra is said to have

²² N. Elias : op.cit., p.47.

²³ Ibid., pp. 47-8.

visited the State from Ceylon and with Chandravansa's patronage built a monastery on the Yangoma hill in the neighbourhood of the capital. He resided in that monastery for only a few years and preached Buddhism, probably of the Pali Canon of the south, accompanied by a hundred attendant priests and then left the country. Chandravansa died at seventy years of age. He was succeeded by his son, after whom the reigns of fifteen kings, all of Shan names, are recorded without mention of dates.²⁴ The Shan names indicate the recapture of power by the Shans by overthrowing Chandravansa's son and with it putting an end to the Buddhist missionary work.

Hsi-Paw or Tai-Po, as the Shans would call it, was founded by a local chief named Udina in the year 423 B.C. His dynasty continued to 79 B.C. through a line of sixteen kings. In that year Chau-Hung-Hkam (Hso-Hung-Hkam), obviously a Tai Prince, belonging to another dynasty, came into power displacing the ruling house. He built a new city measuring 273 ta from east to west and 289 ta from north to south, the western wall having three gates, and the other three sides two gates each; the wall being seven cubits in height.²⁵ According to a Burmese source Chau-Hung-Hkam ruled over a State consisting of two hundred and ninety villages. These early Shans (Tai) undoubtedly moved westward from the region of the Mekong and used the valleys of the Shweli (Nam Mao) and the Salween as the principal routes to enter the basin of the Irrawaddy from Yun-nan. From the region of Mong-Mao as their central seat in the extreme west in Yun-nan they spread out to the north, west and south making settlements and building States

24 Ibid. p. 12

and cities all over Upper Burma, particularly in its eastern part.

It may be recalled that the fugitive Binnaka Raja died at Male. His followers then split up into three groups, one of which migrated eastward and founded what is called 'the nineteen Shan States' of the east. This shows that the members of this group were Shan. But the Shans of these nineteen States became known as 'the descendants of Binnaka Raja'. It was possibly from their habit of referring to Binnaka Raja as their king that they were looked upon as his descendants by their neighbours.

Thus it is evident that the Shans from South-west China had already settled in Upper Burma from before the reign of Binnaka Raja to become his subjects. They must have come with the invading armies from Yun-nan and also as peaceful settlers, group by group, from very early times and the Shans of Tagaung became subjects of the rulers of the Sakya family. It was a section of these Shans that accompanied Binnaka Raja in his flight from Tagaung. It is possibly this section of the Raja's followers, who, after the Raja's death, preferred to start a colony of their own nearer the Shan neighbours of the east. This early Shan colony may be assumed to have developed, in course of time, into what is known in history as 'the nineteen Shan States' of Eastern Burma and its neighbourhood.

The second group moved down the Irrawaddy and entered the Western Country, which was then ruled by the Princes of the Sakya dynasty of Tagaung, descended from Abhi Raja, with their capital at or near a hill called Kalëtaungnyo in the southern part of the Kuba valley. As already mentioned, Abhi Raja

left behind two sons, Kan Rajagyi (Prince Elder) and Kan Rajange (Prince younger), who, on their father's death, disputed the succession to the throne, and the younger brother contrived to possess it for himself. At this the elder Prince Kan Rajagyi went away down the Irrawaddy and then proceeded up the Chindwin river and founded a dynasty at Kale. It was at Kyaukpadaung immediately to the south-east of new Pagan that he placed his son Muducitta (Madhu Citra) as the ruler over the Pyu, Kanran (or the Kanyan who were Arakanese) and Sak (Thek) tribes of the area.²⁶ Muducitta next moved to Rakhaing²⁷ leaving his line of rulers at Kyaukpadaung and founded the kingdom of Dhanyavati. Tambula, a lineal descendant of Muducitta, appears to be the last ruler of the Tagaung Sakya family at Kyaukpadaung. The third group of Binnaka Raja's followers remained at Male with the chief queen Naga-Seng.

At that time another Sakya Prince, named Dhaja Raja, of Kapilavatthu visited Male and espoused the widow Naga-Seng being of the same Sakya clan. The event that drove this Prince to Burma was an invasion of Kapilavatthu by Prince Vitatupa

26 The Glass Palace Chronicle, p.3.

27 The Arakanese call themselves Rakhaing and their country Rakhaingpyi. According to Sir Arthur Phayre, the word is a corruption of the Pali rakkhaso (Skt. rakshasa) meaning 'ogre' (Burmese bilu) or guardian of the mansion of Indra on Mount Meru. - vide Hall A History of South-east Asia. p. 328 ; Phayre : History of Burma, 1883, p. 41.

(Vidudabha) of Kosala,²⁸ Dhaja Raja fled towards the east and first founded a kingdom in Moriya.²⁹ After reigning for a short

28 The cause of the invasion is related as follows :- "Pasenadi (Prasenajit), the Kosalan king of Savatthi, sought in marriage a daughter of Mahanama king of Kapilavatthu; who, desirous of preserving the purity of his race, gave him not a princess of the blood royal but gave him his daughter by a slave woman, the princess Vasabhakhattiya. And she was made queen and bore prince Vitatupa (Vidudabha, a distortion of Vallava). He, when he came of age, visited Kapilavatthu. Now when he returned home, they washed with milk the place he had occupied, reviling it as the place of a man slave-born. When he came to know of it, he nursed his wrath and said, 'when I am king, I will wash in the blood of their throat!' So when his father was no more, he remembered his wrath and marched out with his fourfold army thrice to destroy the Sakiyan princes, but the Blessed Buddha prevented him. Howbeit the fourth time the Buddha, considering the past life history of the Sakiyans, prevented him not; and Vitatupa marched with a great army and reached Kapilavatthu and slew the whole Sakiyan race, save those who dwelt with king Mahanama, not sparing even suckling babes. ... Thereafter the Sakiyan princes took refuge in diverse places, such as the cities of Moriya, Vedissagiri, and Panduraja. ... When thus - the Sakiyan princes perished, Dhajaraja the Sakiyan king moved with his followers from the Middle Country and first founded and reigned in Moriya". - Glass Palace Chronicle, p.4. See also Edward J. Thomas : The Life of Buddha, (Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., London), 1949, pp.139-40. That there was such a massacre of the Sakya Princes and their families may well have been a historical fact in spite of conflicting details about it. This event is described in the Jataka and the Dhammapada Commentary. - vide Trans. in Harvard Oriental Series, vol. 29, pp. 30-46.

29 The place name Moriya is from the Moriyas of Pipphalivana. Moriya occurs in the Buddhist literature, such as Dhammapada. In Gotama-Purana it is called Moranga, and in the Arakan Chronicle it is mentioned as Mowrin and now it is Mwerin. Moriya is also the classic name of the Kuba valley and there is also the Moreura petropolis of Ptolemy. Mauroya, ~~Mauroya~~ as Col. Burney tells us from Burmese history, preceded Tagaung as the seat of Sakya kings (see Col. Burney in JASB, V, 163). Mauroya is now known as Mueyen (a Burmese form), according to Yule, and is a town not far south from Bhamo. Probably Dhaja Raja's first kingdom was in the Kuba valley and Mueyen was its capital and the second kingdom in Thintwe in the Tagaung country. Mauroya, after the name of the ruling clan, was perhaps another city south of Bhamo. The occurrence of this place-name indicates that not only the Sakyas but also the Moriyas came to Burma and built cities. The Mauryas belonged to a Himalayan clan like such other peoples as the Lichchhavis of North Bihar and Nepal. With their gradual absorption in the Brahmanical society, they claimed the status of Kshatriyas, although orthodox Brahmanists regarded them as no better than Sudras. See Inscriptions of Asoka by Dr. D.C. Sircar (The Publications Division, New Delhi), 1957, p.11.

period over that small kingdom he abandoned it and founded another kingdom in Thintwe in Burma. He left Thintwe for Male where he met queen Naga-Seng and married her. He then 'founded and reigned in Upper Pagan' where he built a new fortified capital city immediately beyond the north wall of the old city. Here he reigned over the ancient kingdom of Sangassarattha or Sankissa of Abhi Raja in the Tagaung country. Dhaja Raja virtually restored and reconstructed the old Sakya kingdom in Burma. On ascending the Throne³⁰ he assumed the title of Thado Jambudipa³¹ Dhaja Raja³² and changed the name of the kingdom into Panchala. This Sangassarattha of the Sakyas is Tagaung of the Burmese and Tung-Kawng³³ of the Shans. Dhaja Raja's kingdom was founded, according to the Burmese Chroniclers, in

30 The coronation ceremony is an instance of mixed religion. It is a mixture of Brahminical and tribal forms. First a State ceremony, called Thingyan, is performed and then titles are bestowed on the learned and one thousand and three score title-warrants are given to ministers and high officials, to his minions, masters of elephants and horse, foot-soldiers, wealthy men, Brahmins, Astrologers, Doctors of medicine and artisans. While ascending the place, the king has on his right Brahma and the Naga king, and on his left Sakra and Pajjuma. Eight Brahmin Councillors are present, each holding a dextral conch in his hand, above on the right. Attended by his Generals and Ministers, a hundred thousand in all, two chief queens, seven hundred concubines, four-score and ten white elephants, one hundred and four-score Sind horses and an host of officials, he ascended the ground-palace. Thence he ascended the main palace; and in honour of his ascension he partook of food. Pots of rice and curry - of each one hundred three score and ten - were served in jewelled salvers. He offered food moreover to the god of the birth day plant, also to Sakra and Brahma and the guardian spirits of the Umbrella, the palace, and the city. On the floor of the palace food was scattered. It was eaten by two cats, and one hour later by two men, one hour later the king himself partook of it; then the heir-apparent, then the Ministers and officials - G.E.Cr., p.5.

31 Skr. Jambudvīpa which refers to India.

32 Properly Skr. Dhvāja-Raja.

33 Also Tung Kung of the Assamese Chronicles of the Ahoms.

the twentieth year of the year of religion (523 B.C.) and according to the Shans in the twenty-fourth year of the same (519 B.C.). In colonel Burney's text³⁴ the older city was called Tagaung, and the one rebuilt by Dhaja Raja was named Pinjala-rit (Skr. Panchala-rastra) or Pinja Tagaung,³⁵ shortened into Pagan by the Burmese. Under Abhi Raja the city of Tagaung was named Kambuja Thintawe and was so known also during Buddha's time. It was called Tagaung "because there was but one Naga".³⁶ In ancient times Tagaung was, of course, noted for its Naga tradition.

Dhaja Raja's dynasty, a line of seventeen kings, ruled at Tagaung (Old Pagan) until, within one generation posterior to the year A.D. 568, it was displaced by Hkun-Long, who installed his eldest son Ai-Hkun-Long on the throne of that kingdom.³⁷ In this connection it may be noted that there is a significant mention of a revolt of twelve villages in the Tagaung Chronicle with the result that "Tagaung became servant to the Shan".³⁸ This undoubtedly refers to the first success of the Shans under Hkun-Long's generalship in ousting the Indian Sakya dynasty from the Tagaung kingdom.

Hkun-Long's success seems to have been made easier by a second major invasion of Burma by the Shan-Tayoks (Tarops) from Yun-nan about A.D. 241.³⁹ This invasion added further strength to the Shan element that had already been there from

³⁴ JASB, vol-V, p.163.

³⁵ Ney Elias : op.cit., p. 13. f.n.

³⁶ G.P.Cr., p. 35.

³⁷ Ney Elias : ibid., p.13 ; Kashinath Tamuli Phukan's Assam Buranji, p. 6.

³⁸ G.P.Cr., Introduction, "The Tagaung Chronicle," p.XX.

³⁹ according to Rev. Cushing, and A.D.225 according to others.

before. Ney Elias, from his study of Mao manuscripts, now no longer available, has concluded that the Mao-Shan kingdom developed as a separate political entity before the middle of the seventh century A.D. In the last quarter of the seventh century A.D. Hkun-Long's line in the person of Hkam-Pong-Hpa became supreme among the Mao.⁴⁰ Scott also points out that the Tai Chronicles indicate that the Mao kingdom began in the seventh century A.D. and maintained itself with varying degrees of prosperity until the rise of Anawrahta the Pagan Emperor, who married a daughter of the Mao-Shan ruler of Mong-Mao of that time.⁴¹ The Hsen-Wi Chronicle places the date of the rise of the Mao power a century later.⁴² But the bulk of evidence is in favour of the former authority.⁴³

The historic march of the Tai towards Burma in the middle of the sixth century A.D. was undoubtedly headed by two Tai brothers Hkun-Long and Hkun-Lai and while Hkun-Lai remained behind as the ruler of the countries called Mong-Ri Mong-Ram and Lai-doi, the Elder Prince Hkun-Long, after a short reign at Mong-Ri Mong-Ram, left that country and started the conquest of northern Burma and its eastern neighbourhood placing his sons and descendants as the Governors of the different Mongs (principalities) of his kingdom. He himself became the ruler of a

40 Ney Elias : op.cit., p. 16.

41 GUBSS, I.1, p. 196.

42 "Hsen Wi Chronicle" in GUBSS, I.1, p. 230.

43 Milne and Cochrane : op.cit., pp. 16-17.

'wide country' called Mong-Hku Mong-Ja⁴⁴ or probably Mong-Hku Mong-Jao. The country Mong-Hku Mong-Jao appears to be a wide country in the valley of the Nam Yao in the Northern Shan States of Burma.⁴⁵ This location of Mong-Hku Mong-Jao is also almost definitely indicated in the Ahom Chronicles by the successive place-names mentioned in describing the journeys of two Tai Princes Hkun-Lu-Cheo and Chao-Changnyeu from Mong-Ri Mong-Ram to Mao-Lung.⁴⁶ The Hsen-Wi Chronicle's location of Mong-Ri Mong-Ram (Shan : Mong-Hi Mong-Ham) on the bank of the Mekong to the south-east of the Northern Shan States is confirmatory of this.⁴⁷ But Ney Elias appears to be mistaken when he says that Mong-Ri Mong-Ram is at a short distance from the left bank of the Shweli, some eight or nine miles to the eastward of the city of Mong-Mao.⁴⁸ Elias further says that Hkun-long "crossed the Irrawaddy and shortly afterwards arrived at a place near the Uyu (or Uru) river, a tributary of the Chindwin, where he established himself and founded a city called Mong-Kong Mong-Yawng, whence he sent forth his sons or relations to become rulers of neighbouring States".⁴⁹ Though he admits that the position of Hkun-Long's State is difficult to define, yet he seems to believe that the region comprising Maing-kaing on

44 မိုးကုန်းမိုးညို (Mong-Hku Mong-Ja) of Tai-Ahom Buranji. vide Ahom Buranji - trans. & ed. by G.C. Barua, (Calcutta), 1930, p.22.

45 Mong : country, Hku : wide, extensive ; Mong : country, Jao or Yao : of Jao meaning probably the wide country of the region of the Nam Yao (Burmese Myit-nge) which flows into the Irrawaddy from the Northern Shan States.

46 AB, pp. 42-3 ; also Deodhai Asam Buranji, ed. by Bhuyan, D.H.A.S. 1932, pp. 4-5.

47 GUBSS, 1.1, p.231.

48 N. Elias : op.cit., pp. 15-16.

49 Op.cit., p. 15.

a small left tributary of the Chindwin in the south on the west of the Noajeetee Hills was Mong-Hku Mong-Jao.⁵⁰ Scott thinks that this area is the district of, and round about, the present Singkaling Hkamti. But this area was then somewhat detached from the main Tai areas in Burma. No other records, so far available, give any geographical account indicating the location of Hkun-Long's kingdom in the Upper Chindwin valley as is given by N. Elias.

As already mentioned, Hkun-Long distributed the territories of his extensive dominions among his sons or the princes of his family, about which more will be said below. But the country, allotted to his eldest son, Ai-Hkun-Long, was, according to Ney Elias, Tung-Kung or Tagsung, which, till it was wrested from the Sakyas by him, had been ruled by the Indian dynasty of Dhaja Raja. This kingdom, already overrun by the Shan-Tayoks, not once but a number of times, must have contained a large Tai element to Hkun-Long's advantage.

Almost all the Shan ruling families of Burma, as also the Ahom rulers of Assam, claim their descent from the heavenly House of Hkun-Long and Hkun-Lai. The Mao-Shans, who extended their power to the plains of Upper Burma from the early mediaeval times, mostly concentrated themselves in the fertile valleys of the Nam-Mao (the Shweli), the Upper Irrawaddy and later of the Upper Chindwin and set up kingdoms in

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 15.

them and built capitals of which there are still some unmistakable traces. All these areas were occupied by the Mao-Shans, partly by ousting from them the ruling Indian dynasties, partly by pressing out to the south the Burmese power and partly by subjugating the local tribes, such as the Pyu and the Kachins.

EARLY MEDIAEVAL PERIOD :

The Mao-Shans are a well-known section of the Tai race, who, in the seventh century A.D., were ruling in the powerful kingdom of Mong-Mao-Iung or the great Mao country in the north-eastern frontier region of modern Burma. The kingdom was founded by the Mao-Shans, who settled along the valley of the Shweli river (Nam-Mao). Regarding the origin of the word Mao, Terrien de Lacouperie gives from Chinese sources Ti, Mou and Tsiu as the 'tribal names with settlements in Szetchuen'. According to him Ti has its modern representative in Mong-ti ; Mou in Mong-mou or Mong-mao ; and Tsiu seems to appear in Hso, the Tiger race of Hsen-Wi.⁵¹ The above three are but different clan names of the northern branch of the Tai. The Shweli river was named Nam-Mao by the Mao community of the Tai, who first took possession of its valley, though the precise time when the river was given that name is difficult to ascertain. But yet it may be assumed that it was not later than the sixth century A.D. that the river acquired that name.

⁵¹ Milne and Cochrane : op.cit., p.16.

No one place was the seat of government all through the long period of the Mao rule, but the site often selected was Cheila on the left bank of the Shweli and immediately opposite 'Ma-kau Mong-Lung'.⁵² The city of Cheila is said to have existed where modern Se-Ran or Se-Lan⁵³ has its location, about thirteen miles east of Nam-Hkam, and Mong-Mao is in the modern territory of Yun-nan opposite Se-Lan on the right bank of the Shweli. The present Mong-Mao is an insignificant place being only a petty settlement shorn of all its ancient glory.⁵⁴ The site of Mong-Mao is also the site of the old city of Ma-kau Mong-Lung. But Hallett says that Ma-kau Mong-Lung was an earlier name of Mogaung and that early in the eighth century A.D. it was a Mao capital under that name.⁵⁵ This identification of Ma-kau Mong-Lung with Mogaung cannot be accepted unless the name is used as a general term to mean a great city referring thereby to any ancient capital of the Tai rulers, whether it be Mong-Mao or Mogaung. Another city called Pang-Hkam was also a Mao capital at one time. The ruins of ancient Mao-Shan cities, which were built with strong parapet and formidable entrenchments, are still to be seen in this area.

The political history of the Mao-Shans begins, according to the Mao-Shan and Burmese Buddhist Chronicles,

52 N. Elias : op.cit., pp. 16, 20.

53 The people of Se-Lan or Che-Lan use the water of the Khau-khau a tributary of the Shweli.

54 Sir George Scott : Burma and Beyond, 1932, pp.203-4.

55 "Historical Sketch of the Shans", in Amongst the Shans, p. 332.

with the descent of two heavenly Princes Hkun-Long⁵⁶ and Hkun-Lai on the earth by a golden ladder (or rather a gilded iron ladder).⁵⁷ These two Princes, both brothers, were sent down by Lengdon, the Lord of Heaven⁵⁸ (Indra of the Assamese Buranjis), whose grand-sons they were, to found his dynasty in the lower countries,⁵⁹ once governed by heavenly Princes but now suffering from disorder under the misrule of others. According to the Tai-Ahom Chronicles Hkun-Long and Hkun-Lai were the sons of Shengtaonyenkaihpa Hten-Hkam, who was a

56 Hkun-Lu of Tai-Shan and Burmese Chronicles.

57 Particular mention of "golden ladder" in the various Chronicles is significant. It may mean 'gold and silver path' by which the Princes came down. Sir Arthur Phayre points out that gold was from very early times brought from South-west China down the river Irrawaddy and exported to India. The name, therefore, may have been given from that fact. He also says that it is only within the last twenty years (i.e. 1863-83) that the import of gold bullion from Yun-nan to Upper Burma has diminished; but gold-leaf is still imported from that country to Burma. (vide His History of Burma, p.25). But probably 'golden ladder' means an actual row of steps or a ladder to descend from the highland city of Lengdon to the plains. Attached to the ladder was probably an iron chain also to hold during ascent and descent. A part of the ladder and the chain was perhaps gilded within the region of the heavenly city. Chronicles also mention both iron ladder and iron chain. It was the road for communications with the plains, particularly in the valleys of the Mekong and the rivers of Burma.

58 Though the manner of narrating the story gives a sense of high antiquity to the descent of Hkun-Long and Hkun-Lai, yet their advent is of a comparatively recent but dark period of history and the reference to Lengdon (or Leng-non) and Heaven is difficult to follow being of a legendary character. Lengdon, who is described as the Lord of eight hundred thousand thunders, is identified by the Hindus with Indra.

59 Lengdon's advice to the Princes was "there is no one of my family to rule the lower country, that is, Mong-tau (*Mongtau*) and Mong-tam (*Mongtam*) meaning the country lower than the low. The country is not properly ruled. The strong oppress the weak. They live on cultivation. They are unable to distinguish right from wrong. I, therefore, give you the rule of the country. Both of you must rule the wide country peacefully". This region is also referred to as Mongklang (or Mong-kang) which means a vast country. - AB, pp. 12, 14.

nephew of Lengdon, Hten-Hkam was the son of Chaodahkam, king of Mong-lai and the latter was the youngest son of Npohsaliphangdeng. Hten-Hkam became king in Mongthila⁶⁰ or Mong-htin, the Shan Province of Yun-nan-sen. Cochrane points out that Mong-htin extended westward to the Salween. He further says that "Mong-htin and Upper kingdom of the Ngai-Lao Shans were 'equal in power and glory'; the king of Mong-htin called the northern king 'our father' ; the northern king called the southern 'our son' ; a messenger was sent back and forth on horseback ; he crossed a river in a boat;⁶¹ the mother of the northern king is mentioned, as also astrologers ; Hkun-long and Hkun-lai were sent down to Mong-hi Mong-ham with knowledge and consent of the king of Mong-htin ; they were carried on palanquins, with four bearers each ; they were to pay annual tribute to the northern king".⁶² This passage is based on an original Shan text in possession of Cochrane himself. An almost a parallel account is given of the heavenly kingdoms of Lengdon and Hten-Hkam in a Sibnagar Tai-Ahom Chronicle.⁶³ The above account shows that it gives, as Cochrane points out, terrestrial facts and no celestial myths and that Lengdon was the ruler of the Upper kingdom of the Ngai-Lao Shans. Thus there

60 From Mithila in India. That Hten-Hkam became king of Mongthila or Mong-thi is mentioned in the Tai-Ahom Buranji as vide AB, p.4. The Indian name was probably applied to Yun-nan-sen at a later date by the Buddhists.

61 From the description it is clear that there was a river which had to be crossed in going from the capital of Lengdon to that of Hten-Hkam and according to the Ahom Chronicle of Sibnagar (p.8) it was "a wide river with transparent water. A large gilded boat was at anchor". The river mentioned appears to be the Mekong.

62 "Shan and Buddhism of the Northern Canon", by Rev. V.V. Cochrane in JRAS, vol. for 1952, p.487.

63 AB, chap.II, pp.5-23.

is no doubt that the Mao-Shans are descended from the great Ai-Lao or Ngai-Lao race of Yun-nan and Sze-chuan. From the Chronicles it is clear that these Ngai-Lao Shans of the sixth century A.D. and their branch, the Ahoms, who entered the Brahmaputra valley, were not Buddhists. As known from the accounts of Nan-Chao, Buddhism had no footing in western Yun-nan at that time. The Ngai-Lao had a peculiar form of religion of their own. If the ancient religion of the Ahoms was any clue to it, then it may be noticed that they worshipped Lengdon, the Lord of Heaven, with animal sacrifices besides a number of other minor deities, whom they propitiated with similar offerings but with less ceremonial grandeur. It was in essence ancestor-worship, the ancestors being represented as rulers of Heaven.

Lengdon was the supreme ruler of Heaven (Chinese T'ien) and his city was in the highest part of it.⁶⁴ This heaven was perhaps no other region than Yun-nan called T'ien in early periods. It appears that among the Counsellors of Lengdon the most trusted were Ja-Hsing-Hpa⁶⁵ (Goddess of Learning), probably the Queen-mother, Loekhri ($\text{w}_0^{\text{e}} \text{r}$) the senior politician or Chief Minister and Hten-Hkam the most powerful ally and nephew of Lengdon himself.⁶⁶ With the object of selecting Princes of his House to rule over the territories in the lower countries, as mentioned

64 AB, p.8.

65 Ya-hsing-hpa or "the heavenly-jewelled lady". The Shans of Yun-nan still use Ya in speaking of any old lady. The Tai people of Upper Assam are heard to address the mother as Jo', a variation of Ya or Ja, and father as Po' in the localities in which they still preserve their ancient customs and language. In polite address young ladies are also addressed as Ya or Jo'.

66 AB. n.9.

above, Lengdon particularly called in Ja-Hsing-Hpa, Laokhri and Hten-Ekam to his palace for consultation. In the meeting that was held they, after due deliberation, decided to appoint Hkun-Long and Hkun-Lai as rulers of those countries and then summoned them for formal appointment. When the latter presented themselves at the palace they were formally invested with royal authority by Lengdon. At the investiture ceremony Lengdon gave them a Sword⁶⁷ (ၵ်းၵ်း) with magic powers as a symbol of authority to be justly wielded against enemies and criminals, a Code of Law to be judiciously applied, an image of a deity called Chum-phra⁶⁸ (ၵ်းၵ်း) exclusively for the ruling Princes of his line to worship. The Sword, which would destroy enemies, was to be placed in the middle of the Council Hall and was to be greeted seven times by the Princes kneeling before it as homage to Lengdon. The image of 'Chum-phra-rung-mong' was originally presented by Phalaibet (God) to Shangdam, who, by worshipping it according to rules, proved a successful ruler. It was to be installed in a temple specially built for it and worshipped according to a set ritual procedure. In addition to the above, he also gave them a pair of drums (ၵ်းၵ်း) to be used only in war and on ceremonial occasions, a tusked elephant (ၵ်းၵ်း) and a pair of heavenly cocks (ၵ်းၵ်း) whose heads and wings should be prepared and eaten by the ruling Prince alone and the legs and thigh bones were to be used for divination. That the heads and wings should be recommended

67. ၵ်းၵ်း : ton : Sword, sheng : holy ; also called Hengdan. See AB, p. 14.

68. Chum-phra : God Chum. Sometimes Chum-sheng which means 'holy Chum'. It is also referred to as Sheng-deo meaning 'holy god'.

for the ruling Prince was possibly from the belief that they symbolized the powers of the head and of the arms, the essential qualities of a ruler.

The Sibsagar Chronicle also brings to light certain facts of great historical value. It has specifically mentioned instances showing that the Tai, particularly the Nao-Shans, were a literate race with an advanced language and culture and alphabet of their own in the sixth century A.D., the age of Hkun-Long and Hkun-Lai. A messenger named Leng-Sheng (*၂၇၇၇၇*), the Lord of Light, proceeded on horseback to Hten-Hkam's Court to deliver to him a letter (*၂၇*) written (*၂၇*) by Lengdon.⁶⁹ The horse was used for carrying mails. For delivering important diplomatic papers or letters containing high policy matter the king usually sent his personal envoy. Addressing the people of Hten-Hkam's kingdom Leng-Sheng said that "both the kings"⁷⁰ are ruling wide countries with great fame. All the countries are progressing well under their rule. They are of equal power and never in war with each other. Both the kings punish the offenders only. Hten-Hkam, the handsome, is a descendant of the All-powerful and is a great king. Each year, Lengdon consults Hten-Hkam about the affairs of their countries. Both the kings are in very friendly terms. Both of them sit on the

69 *၂၇၇၇၇ ၂၇၇၇၇ ၂၇၇၇၇ ၂၇၇၇၇ ၂၇၇၇၇ ၂၇၇၇၇ ၂၇၇၇၇* from
folio 3, p. 5 of Ms. in possession of the writer.

⁷⁰ Lengdon (Shan : Leng-non) and Hten-Hkam, the former being the ruler of the Upper or Northern kingdom of the Ngai-Lao of which the capital was in the highest part of Heaven. It perhaps refers to the northern part of Yun-nan with some southern parts of Sze-chuan. - AB, p. 8.

same throne.⁷¹ They eat and drink together and converse on the affairs of their States". This account gives us glimpses of the political economic and cultural background of the Mao-Shans of the time, which also probably formed the basic material for the construction of the nucleus of the Tai Empire of Nan-Chao. There was progress and prosperity among the Tai under their kings, who ruled the countries, not arbitrarily, but according to the accepted principles of justice which 'distinguished right from wrong' and maintained peace with the neighbouring rulers of the race. Moreover, they had a culture and literature developed from the past, which enabled them to explore the higher principles of social justice and political advancement that found expression in the subsequent history of their activities in the mainland of South-east Asia.

Heavenly Princes had been sent to rule over the lower countries as tributary to Lengdon from long before Hkun-Long and Hkun-Lai and the names of some of them are mentioned in the Chronicles. For instance, one Shang-den was sent as the first ruler of a country called Mong-Shang.⁷² He built the city of Mong-chai⁷³ as his capital and governed the country. This country was full of unruly elements. But he was a great and powerful king and compelled these elements to pay homage to him. He also received homage from the dependent States. He

⁷¹ Meaning thrones of the same kind, which are also of gold, with this difference that Lengdon's throne was of nine stairs (၁၇၇၇၇၇၇၇၇၇၇၇ : Bright throne of gold having nine stairs) and Hten-Hkam's was of eight stairs (၈၈၈၈၈၈ : eight stairs) The difference was probably to show the higher position of Lengdon in rank and precedence being regarded as the Lord of Heaven.

⁷² AB, p. 10.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 8. Perhaps Mong-chai = Mong-Tai.

was ably assisted in his administration by the poet Shangsheng and the Councillor Shangbun, the forefather of the Deodhais. Once in the lower regions, a country, ruled by Hkun-Kum of the line of heavenly (Tai) princes, fell into disorder. At this, Lengdon sent Prince Shengngeohkam with necessary instructions to take charge of the country and restore peace and order. But he failed to act upto the instructions and proved utterly incompetent as a ruler with the result that the country was once more plunged into lawlessness and violence.

It was the period when the Tai (Mao-Shans) were pushing forward down the Mekong valley and to the west across Upper Burma. There was therefore constant fighting between these new Tai conquerors (Mao-Shans) and the earlier Tai elements and the native tribes. At times, when a Tai ruler happened to be weak, the subject peoples attempted to upset his regime and created disorder. It was necessary therefore to send from heaven some powerful ruler to restore order by reducing the ungovernable races to submission. Lengdon, this time, determined to send his grandsons. "He whose forefathers were never rulers", remarked Lengdon, "can hardly be expected to be a king. He can never get homage from others". Approving the remark Ja-Hsing-Hpa said that "if an ordinary being be sent he will not be able to rule the earth. You should, therefore, send your grandsons to rule the wide earth."⁷⁴ Leokhri, the great politician and the oldest

⁷⁴ AB, p.10.

of the gods, too, agreed to the proposal. Then Lengdon asked all the gods (the Tai) their opinion. They all supported the proposal to send as rulers the sons of Hten-Hkam, the Great.

The two brothers, Hkun-Long (Prince-Elder) and Hkun-Lai (Prince-Younger), were then called in and invested with princely authority and sent down to rule over the lower countries,⁷⁵ not arbitrarily as they pleased, but according to a Code of Law which was dictated to them by Lengdon, the supreme Ruler of Heaven. The Code was meant for protecting the life, property and chastity of the subject population. It was specifically enjoined that in the administration of law punishments should be inflicted only after a fair trial. The forms of punishment reflect their emanation from a very humane consideration of principles of justice. The sanctions behind law were almost invariably socio-religious in character. Their moderate nature relatively to the age indirectly brings to our mind the picture of a society in which a high ethical sense must have governed the general conduct of the people. The Code contained, among others, the following specimens as models of punishments for the violations of the provisions of the Law :

"If a person commits a crime, don't kill him at once without a fair trial. Cleanse him if he offers a feast by killing a cow. You must confiscate all his properties. A Bailung Pundit will sprinkle incantated water on him with Nam-blak-nya leaves. All of you, then, bless him".⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Countries down the Mekong.

⁷⁶ AB, p.15. The expression nam blak nya means water-flower-medicine, that is, the water of the flower of a medicinal plant. The plant may be either blak-nya-rang, called batguamali in Assamese, or blak-nya-dang, called Tanglati in Assamese and not Turba-grass as the translator translates it. (See AB, p.15).

"If you find a person, having unlawful intercourse with the sister of his mother or of his father, or one depriving his father of his property by force, you must drive him away from the country. If you do not punish such a person, others will be demoralized by his example".⁷⁷

"If any of them lives by oppressing others, he should be sent to exile. If he wants to clear himself of the sin, he should sacrifice three white buffaloes, four white oxen and some hogs to gods. He should also give a feast by killing cows and buffaloes. He should make offer of gold and silver to the Deodhai Pundits. He must ask for pardon from all, kneeling down. All his properties are to be confiscated. He should also greet you. He will then be cleared of his sin."⁷⁸

"If any body robs his mother or if an elder brother takes his younger's wife as his, none should have a look at him. If it happens to any body to come across such a culprit he should cast his eyes to the sky".⁷⁹

"If any body commits rape on his daughter-in-law or his brother's wife, his heart should be pierced with the point of a knife. Such sinners are not to be looked at. If they are not put to death, they should be driven to a jungle which is frequented by tigers and bears. If you wish to purify such persons, you must collect all the people and inform Lengdon by sacrificing ten cows. All the holy things are to be

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 15.

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 16.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 16.

collected there, and "Shengdeo" too. The culprits should kneel down before the heavenly king. A feast should be given by killing cows and buffaloes. Gifts should be offered to all. The culprits should be allowed to drink a quantity of the water with which "Shengdeo" be washed. Then he should perform 'Rikkhvan',⁸⁰ ceremony (a religious ceremony performed to get a new life). After this, he should be stripped of his garments and allowed to go naked".⁸¹

Here the feast and gifts must obviously be given by the culprit and after the 'Rikkhan' ceremony he is not allowed in the new life to retain on his body anything of the previous life reminiscent of the past misdeed.

"If a person weds a girl of his own family, ... gods should be worshipped by sacrificing three cows and some buffaloes. After this, the Deodhai Pundits will bring holy water and offer nine mehengas (stands full of offerings) to the gods. The Pundits in order to purify the culprit should sprinkle holy water on his body. His whole garment should be taken off and he should be allowed to go away naked. He should relate the story of his crime to the people at large."⁸²

The culprit when purified should throw away the old garment worn in the impure state. Such is the practice also in the Hindu society.

"But those persons who kidnap women and usurp other's property, should be put to death".⁸³

80 Rik : call, Khvan : life.

81 Ibid., p. 16.

82 Ibid., pp.16-17.

83 Ibid., p.17.

In case of females the punishments appear to be less severe. If a female, for instance, unlawfully unites with a male person "the hands of the female should be bound together towards the back, and she should be made to pay homage to the gods by falling prostrate on the ground. After this, she is to be cleansed by making her wash her body with water purified with holy plants".⁸⁴

Hkun-Long and Hkun-Lai were advised by the Lord of Heaven to rule over the new countries, so long torn by lawlessness, with a firm hand but following moral rules and doing justice to everybody.⁸⁵ The mighty Lengdon also assured them of further armed assistance whenever any situation demanded. "I shall send down," he said, "eight lakhs of gods (the Tai) who will cut down all the enemies to pieces as cloths are torn to pieces by a storm".⁸⁶ What Lengdon emphasized most was that they should rule in harmony and never allow anything to disrupt their unity and solidarity. He said "if you quarrel amongst yourselves, you are sure to lose your royal power".⁸⁷

On a comparison of the Laws of Lengdon with those of Manu, then in force in India, certain striking differences in purposes and methods between the two systems are noticed. While the Laws of Lengdon were meant to regulate the secular relations of man and man according to the universal concepts of fundamental justice and the ethical notions of the Tai, those of Manu were framed to preserve the integrity of the

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 17.

⁸⁵ Ibid., pp. 13, 15.

⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 11.

⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 39.

Hindu society, as based on orthodox principles of the Sastras, by the rigorous enforcement of caste rules. The modern secular view of law as respecter of no persons had no place in Manu's system. He gave the pre-eminent position to the Brahmins and made their persons inviolate, whereas the severest corporal punishments were attached to the violations of the law by the Sudras.

The caste privileges and immunities, as were provided in the Code of Manu, have no parallels in Lengdon's Code. For instance, according to Manu, if a Sudra or a member of a 'vile caste' commits an act of violence, however minor, or utters a slander against a Brahmin, he is punished with death or mutilation of the offending limbs, but in similar cases, a Brahmin has to pay only a pecuniary penalty, or at most, may be exiled, for he is immune from capital or corporal punishment, whatever may be the gravity of his offence.⁸⁸ But Lengdon made no provision for such social discrimination in the administration of law. His Laws sought to regulate the relations of individuals, both in the family and the society according to the accepted code of conduct and the sanctions provided were not so severe as those of Manu and included no such disabling and frightful punishments as mutilation of limbs or burning alive the convict to death.

Hkun-Lung and Hkun-Lai, after receiving the necessary instructions from Lengdon, greeted the latter ten times

⁸⁸ Na jatu brahmanan hanyat sarva papesvapi sthitam. Rastradenam vahirkuryyat samapradhanamaksatam. - Manu, VIII, 380 ; also Manu Samhita, VIII, 270-379, 413-14.

by kneeling down before him and also saluted the wise Counsellor Laakhri and the goddess Ja-Hsing-Hpa, who were present at the investiture ceremony. Next they knelt down before the royal deity Chumphra-rung-mong,⁸⁹ an idol of pure gold and then, placing it reverentially in the box, held it on the head and took leave of Lengdon. They set out for their appointed country in the right royal style putting on shining coats adorned with stars and wearing golden crowns. They were accompanied by two Ministers, Hkun-Tan⁹⁰ and Hkun-Ban,⁹¹ who were descended respectively from the moon and the sun. Among the other distinguished heavenly companions were Hkun-thao Laakhri,⁹² the astrologer of the family of Jupiter and Hkun Pujakji, the heavenly Pundit.⁹³ A great number of the Tai had already proceeded as a vanguard.

It is of importance to know that the Tai believed themselves to be heaven-born (: heaven-born race)⁹⁴ as

89 It is said to be an image of God in the shape of a heron. - AB, pp. 8, 15.

90 or possibly Hkun-Tan (Hkun : Prince, Tan : Moon).

91 Hkun : Prince, Ban : Sun, Hkun Houn of N. Elias.

92 Laakhri was a senior Counsellor in the Court of Lengdon. He was also a great poet and the Hindus identify him with Visvakarma and say that he was a descendant of Vrihaspati. Shangbun or Deodhais - a family of Ahom Priests whose duty it is to invoke the gods in the religious ceremonies - are descended from him.

93 Pujakji was the ancestor of the Ahom Mahan family of Assam. - N. Phukan's Notes. According to the Hindus he is descended from Sukra. The Mohans are priests, who perform the rites with the appropriate offerings. - T. Phukan : *op. cit.*, p. 3 ; N. Elias : *op. cit.*, p. 13 ; P. Phukan : D.H.A.S. Transcript, vol. IX, p. 181 ; Gurdon : *A Short Note on the Ahoms*, (Morrison & Gibb Ltd., Edinburg), p. 12 ;

- AB, p. 24.

94 AB, p. 18.

distinguished from the non-Tai races, whom they called slaves (: race of slaves).⁹⁵ It is almost always so with a conquering and dominating race and the Tai were no exception. 'Lengdon was ruling in the wide country of gods. There eight lakhs (eight hundred thousand) of gods paid him homage'.⁹⁶ The eight lakhs of gods, mentioned in the Tai-Abom Chronicle, were no other than eight lakhs of Tai population (Mao-Shans) where abode it was and Lengdon⁹⁷ was their sovereign. Hence the story of the early Mao-Shans, as fashioned in the Chronicle to give it a heavenly character, appears to the reader extraordinary and mythical ; but, stripped of its garb, it is a history of the Mao-Shans, plain and simple, with its dynastic links connecting the past with the present, the heaven with the earth.

Hkun-Long and Hkun-Lai then proceeded down to the lower plains from the Land of the gods, accompanied by a body of chief men and Councillors⁹⁸ and also an armed

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁹⁷ It is not clear whether Lengdon was the title of the Sovereign or the name of a particular ruler. More probable is that it was a Tai title of the supreme ruler of the Tai in Yun-nan. That title may now be a matter of legend with the changes of time.

⁹⁸ The following list of chief men and Councillors is given in the Chronicle :- 1. Hkun-tai, 2. Hkun-lai-ching, 3. Hkun-la-tao, 4. Hkun-hseng, 5. Hkun-chip-chi, 6. Hkun-khrung-chao-blek, 7. Hkun-chan, 8. Hkun-khvak-hpa-chao-lang-din, 9. Hkun-hpram, 10. Hkun-teng-a-ra-chao-hpa-ban, 11. Hkun-thao-Laokhri, 12. Hkun-Pu-jak-ji, 13. Hkun-klang Phu-ken-mong-khru-hpa, 14. Hkun-tvang, 15. Phu-ken-mong-pum, 16. Kang-khu-mong Phu-kin-mong-ju-nang and 17. Kvan-ngan Phu-kin-mong-mong-li. Most of these dignitaries took their families with them. One Hkun-bang-rai brought down the silver vessels with which Hkun-Long and Hkun-Lai used to drink liquor. - *AB*, pp.24, 40-41.

force⁹⁹ in the month of Agrabayana (Nov.-Dec.) in Lakni Kasheu of the Tai Taoshinga or sexagenary cycle. In addition, ten different kinds of animals¹⁰⁰ were sent down with them. The purpose of sending this moving zoo is not known. These creatures were perhaps necessary as sacrificial offerings for propitiating the gods or spirits and also for sport and food. After reaching the plains they entered a country called Mong-Ri Mong-Ram.¹⁰¹ The country was found deserted and without any government. Probably the hostile elements, who would not submit to the Mao-Shans and had created disorder during the reigns of the former Tai rulers, quitted that part of the vast country either at the approach of the mighty Princes Hkun-Long and Hkun-Lai or by being defeated by the advancing Mao-Shan forces.

There were in that region vast tracts of grassy land and fertile paddy fields. Hkun-Long and Hkun-Lai found to their great satisfaction that the people of the neighbouring

99 The strength of the force is believed to be ninety thousand at the most from the account which says "They brought thirty thousand cooking vessels with them. Three persons could eat out of each vessel" - AB, op.cit., p.40. Here G.C. Barua's translation is wrong since in the text ৩০০০ means three times ten thousand. Hence they brought thirty thousand cooking vessels.

100 The lists of animals are given at two places of the Sibsagar Ahom Chronicle. List I. - "alligators, bears, tigers, serpents, monkeys, seven million wild cats, eight otters seven crows, nine hogs and ten lizards." (p.24). List II. - "a deer, an alligator, three bears, a tiger, a snake, a monkey, a wild cat, seven otters, eight hogs, and a cat." (p.41). In Deodhai Asam Buranji, ed. by S.K. Bhuyan, (D.H.A.S., Gauhati, Assam), p.3, list of animals is as follows :-

৩০০০টি পোষা পালি, ৩০০০টি গাভী, ৩০০০টি মুরগি, ৩০০০টি
৩০০০টি গাভী, ৩০০০টি মুরগি, ৩০০০টি গাভী,

101 Mong-Ri : Country uninhabited, Mong-Ram :
Country deserted.

districts, probably mostly Tai,¹⁰² assembled there and warmly welcomed them. Large numbers of these people also loyally joined with them. The Princes then decided to build a city and a palace in the central part of the country Mong-Ri Mong-Ram. Thousands of people helped them to build the capital city with fortifications and ditches all around it. They also constructed a large palace or Haw-Lung¹⁰³ in that city for the Princes. The throne room of the palace was nicely decorated with cloth carpets spread over mats on which a throne of gold was placed. The Tai people, who came down from Heaven in great numbers, selected suitable sites in a fertile valley near a hill and set up villages of their own with the co-operation of the local people.

Both Hkun-Long and Hkun-Lai installed themselves as rulers of Mong-Ri Mong-Ram in obedience to the mandate of Lengdon, who, at the investiture, had commanded "I, therefore, give you the rule of the countries. Both of you must rule the wide countries peacefully".¹⁰⁴ A kind of dual principedom was thus established. The Princes sat on the thrones¹⁰⁵ decorated with gold-embroidered cloth.¹⁰⁶ The great golden royal umbrella was "spread over them both".¹⁰⁷ The nobles, officers and the audience sat around them in a circle.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰² "I send you down", said Lengdon, "with these essential instructions. The Tais are dwelling there". - AB, p.15.

¹⁰³ Haw : palace, Lung : large.

¹⁰⁴ AB, p.12.

¹⁰⁵ Some times only one throne is mentioned for both the rulers. Ibid., p.18.

¹⁰⁶ DAB, p. 2.

¹⁰⁷ DAB p. 2 ; AB, p.40.

¹⁰⁸ AB, p. 19.

Hkun-Long and Hkun-Lai, having installed themselves as rulers of Mong-Pi Mong-Ram, made a thorough survey of the country and its frontiers mounting on an elephant and then divided the lands among the subjects. They ruled the country harmoniously and well and the abundance of produce of the vast agricultural tracts gave them perfect economic security. All people including the neighbouring chiefs paid them homage and annual tributes and remained loyal to them.

The Princes were advised by Ja-Hsing-Hpa to worship them, their heavenly ancestors,¹⁰⁹ at the end of a year by sacrificing an elephant and in the next year by killing a cow and a buffalo. They were then sent down to the earth with their blessings to be undisputed rulers. Lengdon ordered the Princes to eat the heavenly fowls at the end of a year¹¹⁰ and further said "The Tais should eat the flesh of the heavenly fowls. You will then be in possession of stores of wealth".¹¹¹ But the Princes having descended to the earth found upon enquiry that the fowls were left behind through forgetfulness while departing from Heaven. They also could not remember the ritual procedure and the sacred formulae necessary for the worship of the holy Sword and the drums.¹¹²

It became thus imperative on their part to send for the heavenly fowls and also for the ritual procedure and formulae, otherwise it would not be easy for them to subjugate

109 Here Ja-Hsing-Hpa herself, Lengdon, Hten-Hkam and others of their heavenly family are meant.

110 AB, p.18.

111 Ibid., p.11. According to N.Elias's version, immediately on arriving on the earth to kill and eat the cock or cocks - Elias, op.cit., p.13.

112 DAB, p.2.

the native races in the new country. Hkun-Long and Hkun-Lai asked the persons assembled there if any body would be able to do the job of ascending to Heaven to bring the fowls and other things. The job being arduous, none dared, not even their Ministers Hkun-tun and Hkun-ban. But there appeared one man named Langu (*လှ, ယ*), who ventured to undertake the journey to bring the heavenly fowls and the other articles as desired by the Princes. Langu is believed to be the Shan form of the Chinese name Laongu of Lao-Wu. He was also called Chao-Ti-Kan.¹¹³ Langu's readiness to serve the heavenly Princes was inspired by the ambition to become the ruler of the Hke country taking advantage of their present difficulty. He therefore bargained for it as a reward for doing this particular piece of job. "I wish to ascend the ladder", said Langu to Hkun-Long and Hkun-Lai, "and bring down the heavenly fowls, I alone shall climb the ladder. O ! Kings of the Tais, I shall fetch the holy cocks, provided, you make me king of the 'Khe' (China) country". Both the Princes then promised to give him the Hke country, which was Mithila¹¹⁴ (Yun-nan)

¹¹³ N. Elias : *ibid.*, p.13; Scott is of the opinion that the story of Hkun-Long and Hkun-Lai has been taken by the Shan Chronicler (from whose work Elias writes) from the Burmese *Maha Yazawin*. - GUBSS, I.1, p. 218.

¹¹⁴ Mithila or Meithila is the Pali or classical name for Mong-Hke which is no other than Yun-nan. Videha or Wideharit (Wideha-rastra) is another name for it. Such application of ancient Indian geographical names to this part of south-west China may be attributed to early Buddhist missionary influence. Langu's Hke must have been some State in Hke (Yun-nan). This State seems to be Mong-htin itself over which Hten-Hkam had been ruling. But when his two sons, Hkun-Long and Hkun-Lai, left for the lower countries the question of succession must have arisen and its settlement probably rested with the two Princes. Had not Hke belonged to them there would have been no point in Langu's asking for it from them.

according to N.Elias, to govern probably as a tributary ruler. Obviously by Hke the whole of China could not be meant at that time.

Langu then went up and reached the abode of the gods and entered into the palace of Ja-Hsing-Hpa. He knelt down before the goddess and greeted her and explained the reason of his coming to Heaven. After listening to him she brought out the holy fowls and handed them to him with the necessary instructions, to be communicated to the Princes, about the proper use of the Sword and the drums.¹¹⁵ In her instructions she particularly pointed out that the Princes must take only the heads and wings of the fowls and spare their leg and thigh bones for calculating future omens and that the Sword is to be placed in the middle of the Council Hall tied to a post, by the side of which the Princes sit.

Having received this message Langu descended from Heaven holding the fowls on his shoulder and in due time arrived back at Mong-Ri Mong-Ram. But the knowledge he had of the magic powers of the heads and wings of the heavenly fowls and the Sword aroused in him the temptation to secure them for himself. He therefore made up his mind to give to the Princes a report just contrary to what he had been told by Ja-Hsing-Hpa. Thus on arriving at the capital, he knelt down before Hkun-Long and Hkun-Lai and humbly reported thus : "I

¹¹⁵ In AB, (p.21) and Tamuli Phukan's AS. B. (p.4) the Sword and the drums too are said to have been left behind. At this, Lengdon, according to T. Phukan (AS. B., ibid.) and Hten-Hkam, according to N. Elias (ibid., pp.13-14), became angry with the Princes for their carelessness.

wish to tell you what Ja-Hsing-Hpa said. She said that 'the Princes might not remember what Lengdon said to them. Let no other person know the secret. The rule of the Khe country may be given to you. The princes should eat the flesh and liver of the fowls of the holy country (*m' w' b' w' l*) The heads and wings are to be taken by you, Langu. The princes should not take the legs of the fowls as they scatter about dungs with their legs when they go out in search of food in the morning. They (the Princes) are prohibited from taking the heads and legs of the fowls. If they follow the advice they will be able to rule the earth.* Langu further said, "Ja-hsing-hpa has ordered you to offer me the Sword and directed you, O Kings ! to rule the countries in the north."¹¹⁶

The Princes believed all that Langu had said and, in fulfilment of their promise, gave him the country of Hke (Mithila). He was also allowed to eat the heads of the fowls with the result that he became a wise and powerful ruler of the Hke country and the heaven - descended Princes, having eaten of the bodies, "remained ignorant Mao-Shans."¹¹⁷ Langu commenced his rule in A.D. 568 with capital at Mong-Kye.¹¹⁸ (Mong-Hke, Langu's dynasty, according to the Shan records, ruled over Mong-Hke (Yun-nan) till A.D. 1038, after which the history is silent.

¹¹⁶ AB, p. 20.

¹¹⁷ N. Elias : *ibid.*, p. 14.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 14. According to Scott Mong-Kye is Mong-Se-Long which is the name by which the Shans know Yun-nan-sen. - GUBSS, 1.1, Rangoon, 1900, p. 219.

It may be noted that the descent and reigning period of Hkun-Long and Hkun-Lai fell within the period of the Chinese Nan Pei Chao or the Southern and Northern Dynasties (A.D. 420-589). It was an era of division of China which weakened her seriously. To the Chinese rulers the rise of the powerful rival Tai State of Mong-Ri Mong-Ram, so close to them, became a source of great menace. At this time the divided China was perhaps too weak also to attack Mong-Ri Mong-Ram. They therefore sent their secret agents to get into the services of Hkun-Long and Hkun-Lai's administration and disrupt the kingdom from within. Langu was probably one of such secret agents. Within a short period the Chinese officers in the services of Hkun-Long and Hkun-Lai succeeded, it is suspected, in creating a dissension between the two Princes over the question of supremacy as rulers.¹¹⁹

Having made their headquarters at Mong-Ri Mong-Ram, Hkun-Long and Hkun-Lai ruled for sometime over that country. They next came to a thickly populated country called Laidoi and built there a city and a fort with ditches around it. They made the fort their residence. In olden times this country of Laidoi was ruled over by a powerful Prince named Hkun-Kum, but on his death his sons Khrai-Hkam and Chao-Sam-Wun could not govern it owing to a violent outbreak of disorder, which upset the regime and caused a great dispersal of the population.¹²⁰ It was probably this disorder that made Lengdon appoint and send down

119 P.K. Buragohain : Ahamar Adi Buranji, (Jorhat, Assam), 1946, p.19.

120 AB, p. 41 ; DAB, p.3.

from heaven another Prince, named Hseng-Ngao-Hkam, for the restoration of peace in and assumption of power over this country. But he failed to rule by neglecting to act according to the instructions of the Lord of Heaven and a great disorder ensued again.¹²¹ Some of the inhabitants crossed the Sri Lohit¹²² and entered into the country called Puphangpau ($\text{U}^{\text{w}} \text{U}^{\text{v}} \text{U}^{\text{v}} \text{U}^{\text{v}}$). There was a serious clash between the aggressors and the natives of Puphangpau, each party cutting down the men of the other party. In this state of things one Men-nam (or Men-dam) by name, said to be a 'Naga slave', made himself ruler of that country. But his rule proved to be one of great oppressions, misdeeds and disorder. Being unable to endure the tyrannies of this upstart the chief men of the country wished to have a Prince of the family of Hkun-Long and Hkun-Lai as a ruler. When the request came, Hkun-Long and Hkun-Lai sent Chao-Tai-Hpa¹²³ to bring that State to order and rule over it. This marks the consolidation of the power of the Mao-Shans in these new countries in Upper Burma.

It appears that Mong-Ri Mong-Ram and Laidoi,¹²⁴ the latter being probably the chief centre of the 'countries in the north', were parts of a vast country, which the Mao-Shans brought under their control, building a fortified city in every strategic area so annexed.

About the location of Mong-Ri Mong-Ram (Shan : Mong-Hi Mong-Ham) it is said in the Hsen-Wi Chronicle that

¹²¹ AB, p.14,

¹²² DAB, p.3. Sri Lohit is the Irrawaddy. Puphangpau or $\text{U}^{\text{w}} \text{U}^{\text{v}} \text{U}^{\text{v}} \text{U}^{\text{v}}$ is not identified. It is some country to the west of the Upper Irrawaddy. It may be the land of the Kachins or Nagas.

¹²³ According to DAB, (p.3) son of Hkun-Lai.

¹²⁴ It is difficult to locate Laidoi in a modern map

"In the time of the first Maha Thamadamings, Hkun Lu and Hkun Lai, the boundaries extended to Mong La, Mong Hi and Mong Ham on the banks of the Mekhong." It is further stated that Mong Hi and Mong Ham are "on the frontier of Mong La in the province of Keng Mai" (Chieng-Mai).¹²⁵ W.W. Cochrane, who made a thorough study of the available Shan manuscripts, being himself a master of Shan, further clarifies the geographical location of Mong-Ri Mong-Ram. He asserts: "Four Shan records agree in fixing the location on the Me-hkawng; two of them say that it was on the border of Chieng-Mai; and one is more explicit and say distinctly that it comprised Mong-lu, Mong-yon, Mong-kang, and Mong-hpa. Just what territory was included in these states we do not know, but the general location is clear enough."¹²⁶ Mong-Ri Mong-Ram was undoubtedly a part of the ancient Tai State of Hsip-Hsawng-Pan-na (Keng-Hung), which was situated on the western bank of the Mekong river and which comprised a part of the southern territory of Yun-nan, a part of the eastern Shan States and a part of northern Siam with Chieng-Sen, Chieng-Rai and Maang-Fang.¹²⁷

Though Hkun-Long and Hkun-Lai jointly administered the affairs of the country under them, which comprised Mong-Ri Mong-Ram, Laidol and such other territories as were conquered by the Mao forces, Hkun-Lai, for administrative convenience,

¹²⁵ GUBSS, I.1, p. 231.

¹²⁶ "Shan and Buddhism of the Northern Canon" by W.W. Cochrane in JRAS, vol. for 1912, pp. 487-88.

¹²⁷ L. Hoontrakul: op. cit., pp. 99-100.

made Laidoi his residence, while Hkun-Long continued to rule from the capital at Mong-Bi Mong-Ram.

In due time, as instructed by Lengdon, the heavenly Princes performed the State ceremony of planting a peepul tree¹²⁸ in the name of the eldest brother Ai-Hkun-Long, the master of elephants and treasures.¹²⁹ The ceremony was peacefully concluded and then salt was distributed among the people. But after some days Hkun-Lai's mind became poisoned, probably at the instigation of some Chinese secret agent in the garb of an officer of the realm.¹³⁰ Disregarding the advice of Lengdon to rule the country with unity between them, he conspired to become the real king by reducing his elder brother to the position of a subordinate ruler. With that intention one day, without the knowledge of his brother, he came to the spot where the peepul tree was standing and tied to the root some gold strings. Then he allowed some

128 not a banian tree as Barua translates it. (see AB, p.21, para 23). The name of the tree in the Ahom text is Tun-rung (*মুখুণ্ড*) which means a peepul tree, in Assamese Anhat tree (*এহাট*) and in Sanskrit Asvattha (fiscus religiosa) which represents long life. Lengdon sent Puphishu as the presiding deity of the forest who would dwell in this peepul tree. Lengdon instructed Hkun-Long and Hkun-Lai : "When the month of dinpet (Ahar, June-July) comes and the lakes and rivers be full of water, Puphishu should be adored by all the people by sacrificing buffaloes. Thus propitiated he will keep you all safe and sound." - AB, p. 11. The ceremonial planting of this peepul tree for long and happy life was done in the morning of one auspicious day. According to Tamuli Phukan's Buranji Hkun-Long and Hkun-Lai descended from Heaven in the month of Agrabayana (Nov.-Dec.) of A.D. 568. If so, then the three ceremony was performed after about six or seven months of their arrival in Mong-Ri Mong-Ram, and in the meantime, they settled down firmly in this country and built two fortified cities, one in Mong-Ri Mong-Ram and the other in Laidoi.

129 AB, pp. 11, 20. Here Ai-Hkun-Long means Hkun-Long, Ai as he is the eldest son of Hten-Hkam.

130 P.K. Buragohain : op.cit., p.10.

days to pass peacefully. When the plan for seizure of power matured, one day he suddenly asked his brother whether he had tied gold strings to the root of the tree. Hkun-Long replied in the negative. Then Hkun-Lai, to his brother's astonishment, asserted thus : "I am the real king of the country. I planted the tree and attached gold strings to its root. O, brother ! you may examine it." On examining the root of the tree Hkun-Long found the gold strings and realized what was in store for him. There was then a difference between the two brothers. But Hkun-Lai, with the help of his supporters, took possession of all the things including the royal umbrella given by Lengdon.¹³¹

Hkun-Long was a noble soul. Without further botheration he abdicated and left for Heaven, carrying with him the image of Chum-phra, to report the matter to Lengdon. Before he went he placed his son Tao-Long-Hpa-Tao-Lu-Lo¹³² as the ruler of Mong-Ri Mong-Ram. When Hkun-Long related the matter to Lengdon the latter was fired up with rage and cursed Hkun-Lai in the following words : "He will not be able to reign long and come back to heaven. Know it for certain that his family will not reign for a long period." Lengdon then advised Hkun-Long to go back and rule the country called Mong-Hko Mong-Jao. Hkun-Long accordingly returned to the earth and assumed the rulership of the said country. He soon rose to be a powerful

¹³¹ AB, pp. 21-22.

¹³² presumably as subordinate to Hkun-Lai. In some accounts Tao-Lu-Lo is described as the eldest son of Hkun-Long. (vide AD, p. 88 ; AB, pp. 24, 41 : DAB, p. 3).

but benevolent king with a wide fame for his popularity and good government. The dominant element of his kingdom were the Tai who provided the main source of strength for embarking upon schemes of further expansion of his dominions.

Hkun-Long ruled for forty years and during this period he found himself master of a vast empire extending from Chieng-Mai in northern Siam in the east to the neighbourhood of the Lohit (the Brahmaputra river) and the Assem Hills in the west. It comprised almost the whole of Upper Burma and a part of Siam to the west of the Mekong with possibly the rich rice area of Kyaukse to the south of Ava. The Chronicle is, however, silent about the annexations made by Hkun-Long to his original kingdom. But it can be safely assumed that at this time there was a vast westward surging movement of the Mao-Shans over Upper Burma under the leadership of Hkun-Long and other minor chiefs.

Hkun-Long divided his empire and appointed his sons to rule over its different divisions. His eldest son (Ai-Hkun-Long), possibly Tao-Long-Hpa-Tao-Lu-Lo, was given the rule of the country Taitamkang¹³³ and Mong-Mit. Hkun-Hpa, his second son, was appointed ruler of Mong-Teu or lower countries.¹³⁴ He had to supply as tribute ten lakhs¹³⁵ horses every year. He

¹³³ Tunk-Kung of the Shans or Tagaung of the Burmese. In Tamuli Phukan's *Buranji* it is mentioned as Tai-Tung-Kung, that is, Mungkang. If so, it would mean Mogaung which is improbable. For Mong-Mit see *AB*, p. 22, para 24.

¹³⁴ N. Elias identifies this territory as Mong Yang which is Mohmyn of the present day.

¹³⁵ It simply means a large number.

placed his third son Hkun-Ngu in La-Mong-Tai¹³⁶ as the ruler of that country. He was directed to send as tribute three hundred elephants annually. Hkun-Long made his fourth son Hkun-Hkak-Hpa¹³⁷ ruler of the country called Jun-Long,¹³⁸ his annual tribute being a quantity of gold. He sent his fifth son Hkun-La to rule Mong-Kula¹³⁹ on the Assam border and directed him to supply horses as tribute. According to N. Elias and Tamuli Phukan the tribute was to be paid in water from the Chindwin river. In T. Phukan's Buranji the river mentioned is Dihing, which may mean the Chindwin. Hkun-Ta,¹⁴⁰ the sixth son of Hkun-Long, was made the ruler of Ava in Burma. His tribute was fixed at two viss¹⁴¹ of rubies yearly. Hkun-Long's seventh son Hkun-Hsu¹⁴² lived with his father at the capital and succeeded to the throne of Mong-Hko Mong-Jao after his father's death. Thus the great patriarch king Hkun-Long became a historic

136 According to N. Elias this country is Labun (or La Bong) near Zimme (Chieng-Mai) in Siam. Labun is called Jlutra (or Yu-tara) in Tamuli Phukan's Buranji.

137 Hkun Kwat Hpa of N. Elias.

138 or Yon Lon or Mong-Yawng. N. Elias thinks that Mong Yawng was, probably, Garnier's Mong Yong, the former capital of Keng Cheng, the Cis-Mekhong portion of which is now annexed to Keng Tung.

139 or Mong-Kala or Kale on the right bank of the Chindwin above Minjin. Kula refers to the Hindus and in the text it is *ဝဏ္ဏမုသု*; the country of the Hindus. In another Tai manuscript Nam-Ti-Lao (Lohit river) is said to be the western boundary of Hkun-La's State. If so, it is not impossible that his State comprised an area of Hindu population or its former rulers were Hindus.

140 Hkun Hsa, according to N. Elias.

141 One viss is about 7 lbs weight.

142 or Hkun-Ju (see AB. p. 23).

figure among the Mao-Shans as the heavenly ancestor of the Mao-Shan dynasties who ruled over the vast area from the Chindwin to the Mekong. Since then the Shan principalities rapidly increased in number from conquests and the habit of placing the sons and relatives of the ruling house as governors of the newly formed States.

In Mong-Ri Mong-Ram Hkun-Lai ruled for seventy years with his capital in Laidoi.¹⁴³ On his death his son Chao-Ai-Jep¹⁴⁴ ascended the throne in A.D. 638 and ruled the country for forty years. The famous Ai-Jepi Lakni or Era of the Mao-Shans commenced with the year of his accession. It may be noted that both the Burmese and Siamese national eras also commenced with this date.¹⁴⁵ Chao-Ai-Jep died in A.D. 678 leaving no heir. As the throne fell vacant the ministers and nobles sent messengers to Chao-Hkun-Jun, the ruler of Mong-Hko Mong-Jao, to inform him of the situation with a request for a prince of his family. Chao-Hkun-Jun sent his son Hkam-Pong-Hpa to occupy the vacant throne and rule the country.¹⁴⁶ Hkam-Pong-Hpa ruled for twenty-five years and was succeeded by his eldest son Hkam-Tyap-Hpa in A.D. 703. In this very year Hkam-Tyap-Hpa, the younger brother of Hkam-Tyap-Hpa, became ruler of Mong-Mao-Long and established his capital at Ma-Kao

143 AB, p. 41; DB, pp. 3-4. N. Elias and Tamuli Phukan make no mention of Laidoi.

144 Tyao-Ai-Jep-Tyat-Hpa of Tamuli Phukan or (Hau king) Ai-dyep-that-pha of N. Elias, (vide T. Phukan: op.cit., p.7; N. Elias : op.cit., p.10).

145 Hallett says that the Siamese civil era, which dates from A.D. 638 is said to have originated in Sangkalok. It was associated with the foundation of the Phra Ruang dynasty in that State. - Hallett in Amongst the Shans, pp.344-45.

146 Tamuli Phukan : op.cit., p.7.

Mong-Lung. But according to N.Elias Hkam-Tyip-Hpa (Kam-sip-pha of Elias) succeeded his elder brother Hkam-Tyap-Hpa in A.D. 703 and established his court at Ma-Kao Mong-Lung, thus finally abandoning Mong-Ri Mong-Ram as capital.

Thus Hkun-Long's posterity became supreme among the Mao and from Hkam-Pong-Hpa's accession reigned more or less peacefully in regular succession for about seventy-five years. During this period of political expansion of the Mao-Shans all over Upper Burma with their centres in Mong-Ri Mong-Ram, Mong-Hko Mong-Jao and Ma-Kao Mong-Long, rulers of the Vikrama dynasty ruled at Prome, the centre of the Pyu. Then came political pressure from Nan-Chao. Ko-lo-feng, the powerful king of Nan-Chao, after having won notable victories in the wars with the Chinese and the tibetans, sent his expeditions to Burma not long after A.D. 754. He broke the power of the Pyu, who were still holding a predominant position over a considerable part of Central Burma and in this, though the history is not very clear, the Mao-Shans probably co-operated with and acknowledged the suzerainty of Nan-Chao.

The predominance of Nan-Chao over Upper and Central Burma and also a part of Assam seems to have continued to the middle of the ninth century A.D., if not more, and during this period, according to the Chinese, the Pyu kingdom came to a sudden end in 832 when the 'Man rebels' plundered the Pyu capital and deported three thousand captives to Mun-nan-Fu.¹⁴⁷ At the time of its final fall the Pyu kingdom was already reduced in size and strength and pushed to the south by the

¹⁴⁷ Hall : A History of South-east Asia, p.122. According to Hall the Pyu claimed suzerainty over all the

Mao-Shans who had been exerting a steady pressure on it ever since the advent of Hkun-Long. The political extinction of the Pyu chronologically synchronized with the reign of Fong-Yeh in Nan-Chao.¹⁴⁸ Fong-Yeh was another very powerful monarch of that kingdom who sent an expedition to Burma and also defeated the Chinese.

The Burmese version of the history of Mong-Mao, as contained in the Hsen-Wi Chronicle,¹⁴⁹ makes mention of two Shan kings Hkun-Lu and Hkun-Lai (Maha Thamadamins) who ruled in Mong-Mao for eighty and forty years respectively covering a period from A.D. 835 to A.D. 951. The important fact to be noted about these two kings is that Hkun-Lai was the son and successor of Hkun-Long, but he died without leaving any male issue to succeed him. Four Elders or Htao-Mongs of the ruling community had to manage the affairs of the country, which was then a confederacy of eight Shan States, from A.D. 951 to 956 before they could bring five sons and a few relatives of Hkun-Lu-Hkam, the then king of Mong-Ri Mong-Ram, to rule the States. All these princes are said to be the "descendants of the house of Hkun-Lu and Hkun-Lai".¹⁵⁰ They are sent to be rulers

¹⁴⁸ L. Hcontrakul presents to us a map of the Nan-Chao kingdom as it was during the T'ang Dynasty in China. The map was obtained from the book Chinese History, Book 2 which is still used in the Chinese Secondary School in China. The map covers an area extending from the eastern boundary of East Pakistan on the west to the sea in Indo-China on the east and from Szechuan on the north to the sea on the south including Malay in the kingdom. - Op. cit., p. 99. Here Nan-Chao included Assam and Burma.

¹⁴⁹ It is pieced together from two manuscripts, one furnished by the Northern Shan State, the other by the Southern.

¹⁵⁰ Vide Hsen-Wi Chronicle in GUBSS, op. cit., p. 232. Here the reference is evidently to the heavenly Princes earlier sent down by Lengdon.

over Cis-Salween States. This shows that the Salween was the boundary between Mong-Mao-Lung and the Mong-Ri Mong-Ram States and dependencies in the region of Hsip-Hsawng-Panna and Keng-Mai (Chieng-Mai) between the two great rivers Mekong and Salween. Hkun-Lu-Hkam had many sons most of whom were Governors at that time in the different divisions of the province of Keng-Mai.¹⁵¹

As regards the parentage of Hkun-Lu of Mong-Mao the Chronicle relates that one Tung Hkam, a prince of the ruling house of Hsen-Wi, married Princess Pappawadi (Parvati ?), the daughter of Sao Wong-Ti, king of Meiktila (Yunnan), that Sao Wong-Ti built for the new couple a palace in the town of Tung Hkaw in Mong-Mao where they were made Governors in the year 125 B.E. (A.D. 763) and that a son, named Hkun-Lu, was born to them. From the above account it appears that Hkun-Long and his wife were governors under Sao Wong-Ti. Sao Wong-Ti here could be no other than the great Ko-lo-feng of Nan-Chao who had already extended his sway over Burma. Though there is a certain degree of correspondence in names and some facts between the story of the descent of Hkun-Long and Hkun-Lai from heaven and that described in the Hsen-Wi Chronicle, yet they present different historical facts in different contexts and periods. Farther the account of the Hsen-Wi Chronicle fits in with the general background of events of that period. It seems that this part of the Mong-Mao history has been inadvertently blended together with the earlier account of the descent of Hkun-Long and

151 Ibid., pp. 231-32.

Hkun-Lai by later chroniclers or compilers with the result that one meets with conflicting narratives about the origin of the branch of the Tai that migrated westwards across Upper Burma. This confusion crept into some of the Assamese Chronicles also in which, among others, the heavenly prince Hkun-Lai is said to have left no issue.¹⁵²

Nan-Chao's exercise of suzerainty over Burma did not last much beyond the reign of Ko-lo-feng. There is a reference in the Chinese records to the fact that I-mou-hsun, Ko-l-fent's grandson and successor, after having concluded peace with China, sent a present of Pyu musicians to the T'ang Court early in 800. But two years later a formal Pyu embassy, led by Shunanto and accompanied by thirty-five musicians, visited the Chinese Court via Nan-Chao.¹⁵³ Thus it would seem that Nan-Chao suzerainty over the Pyu was negged after about forty years of its existence into that of China when I-mou-hsun formally declared himself and his heirs as 'subjects of China'. Whether this change in the political status of Nan-Chao left the Shan States of Burma independent or placed them under Chinese suzerainty the available records throw no light. On the other hand, for over two centuries that followed the Shan rulers of Burma are not known to have owned any political allegiance either to China or Nan-Chao though, as among themselves, necessary political adjustments were made from time to time according to the practices of Tai polity of those days. But from the middle of the eleventh century A.D.

¹⁵² Vide Asom Buranji (obtained from the family of the late Sukumar Mahanta) ed. by S.K. Bhuyan. p.4.

¹⁵³ Hall : A History of South-east Asia, p. 121 ;

the rapidly growing Pagan Empire¹⁵⁴ of the Burmese under Anawrahta (1044-77) in the central part of Burma became a strong barrier to any further extension of the Shan power to the south and west from its main centre. Anawrahta not only restrained the expansion of the Shan supremacy, but also made a number of expeditions into the Shan country endangering its independence and imposing his nominal suzerainty over some of the Shan chieftains of the eastern highlands. But there is no record to show that he completely subjugated the Shans and annexed their country. On the contrary, he had to build 'a line of forty-three outposts along the eastern foothills to retrain the Shans from attempting to push into the plains'.¹⁵⁵

154 Pagan or rather New Pagan was known as Pugarama in the reign of Anawrahta minsaw (or Mang saw : Chief, king or ruler in the language of the Szis who have racial and linguistic affinities with the Burmans). - G.P.Cr., p. 70. It is mentioned as Pukam in a Cham inscription of the eleventh century and as Fu-kan in Chien kan shu. In Burma its earliest mention is, according to Hall, in an old Man inscription of 1093. Pali classical name for it is Arimaddana. Its ancient Indian name is Tamra-dvipa 'land of copper' in Tattadesa. The Burmese Chronicles mention A.D. 108 to be the date of its foundation with a line of forty kings who had reigned before Anawrahta. But the history of these kings is not known. In the early second century A.D., 88 A.D. according to the Jatabon Yazawin, Thamaddarit (Samuddharaj) is said to have founded nineteen villages at Yon-klutkyun in the neighbourhood of Pagan, but it is significant that amongst these nineteen villages the name of Pagan does not occur. Probably the accounts of Pagan before the ninth century A.D. were those of Old or Upper Pagan. (JERS, vols. XII-XV, 1922-25, pp. 95-96). Hall points out that the name of the predecessor of Anawrahta is mentioned in the inscriptions to be Saw Rahan who built a Buddhist shrine on Mount Turan, some eight miles east of Pagan. Another king, named Pyanpya, is credited with the foundation of the walled city or capital called Pagan in 849.

155 Hall : A History of South-east Asia, p. 124 ;
G.P.Cr., pp. 96-7.

The greatest event in the reign of Anawrahta is his conquest of the Mon kingdom of Thaton (old *Suddhamavati* in *Savannabhumi*) for the Pitakas of the pure form of Buddhism. From the sixth century A.D., a comparatively dark period - a period when *Hkun-Long* of the *Ahom* Chronicles marching from *Yun-nan* conquered Eastern and Upper Burma - to the time of Anawrahta Buddhism in Burma "began to be strangled by various heathen growths and to become mingled with the debased Tantric system which is a mixture of black magic, witchcraft and Siva worship".¹⁵⁶ In Pagan a degraded form of Buddhism, believed to have migrated originally from North Bengal and Nopal, prevailed under the influence of the *Ari*.¹⁵⁷ monks who, it is said, were thirty in number with sixty thousand disciples. Some writers are of the opinion that the *Ari* cult, which held sway in Upper Burma, was a distinct development of Tibetan Buddhism. The *Ari* were centred at *Thamahti* village, a few miles south-east of Pagan. The *Ari* rejected the law preached by the Lord Buddha and professed cults of their own, particularly one of Dragon (*Naga*) worship in which Buddha and his *Sakti* wives figured. The *Ari* were bearded, grew their hair four fingers long, wore robes dyed blue-black, rode horses, drank liquor and went into battle.¹⁵⁸ According to the law preached by the *Ari* a man might

¹⁵⁶ G.E. Harvey : *JBRS*, Aug. 1919, vol. IX, p. 63.

¹⁵⁷ According to *Meung Tin* "*Ari*" is derived from *aranna*, forest, and not from *ariya* as Charles Duroiselle and U Tin would say. The Burmese happened to pronounce the final *nn* as *i*, thus *Arann(a)* = *ari*. The *Ari* are the *Arannabhikkhus* who worshipped neither Nat images nor images of the Buddha, but their own images with offerings of rice, curry and fermented drinks. - ("The Ari of Burma and Tantric Buddhism" in the *Archaeological Survey of India*, Annual Report 1915-16 by Duroiselle. Also Editors' Notes in *JBRS*, vol. IX, Part III, Dec. 1919, p. 155 on "*Ari*".) They were generally *arannika* (forest-dwellers) in their *arannaka* (forest-monasteries). In later periods most of them used to live in the towns and

take the life of another, even of the parents, and yet evade to course of Karma if he simply recited the formula of deprecation, a practice characteristic of the mystic cults of tantrism. Again from the kings and the nobles down to the common people all were under the religious obligation to send their marriageable children just before their marriage to the Ari teachers, the practice being called 'sending the flower of virginity'. They could not be married till they were set free early in the morning. Persons were heavily punished by the king for breaking the custom. The nature of Ari worship is well represented by the frescoes in the Paya-thonzu Padoda at Pagan. The farmer Nyaung-u Saw Rahan, who usurped the throne of Pagan and ruled from A.D. 931 to 964, is the only name of a king before Anawrahta to be mentioned in the inscriptions. Saw Rahan set up an image of the Serpent and asked the people to bow down and worship it.¹⁵⁹ Apparently this king was under the influence of the Ari. But we know from the Glass Palace Chronicle that Saw Rahan was killed and his throne and three wives seized by Kunhsaw Kyaungbyu. In A.D. 986 Saw Rahan's two sons dethroned Kunhsaw and compelled him to lead the life of a monk. The elder of the two sons Kyizo then ascended the throne and ruled till A.D. 992 when, being hit by an arrow of a hunter, he lost his life in the Chindwin valley. Saw Rahan's son Sokkate by his younger wife then succeeded to the throne. Kunhsaw's son Anawrahta by the youngest

159 Harvey : JBR, Aug. 1919, vol. IX,
Part II, p. 63.

wife of Saw Rahan attended on him. But a conflict arose between Anawrahta and Sakkate when the latter took Anawrahta's mother to wife. In a duel between them Anawrahta lanced Sakkate to death and seized the throne. He first offered the throne to his father who had become a monk, but the latter declined the offer. The Chronicle records that Anawrahta then became king in A.D. 1017 and ruled for forty-two years. But the latest researches have lead to the fixing of the period of Anawrahta's reign from A.D. 1077. Anawrahta was a king of ripe perfections and when he heard and saw the wrong and lawless doings of the Ari he was determined to find out and enforce the true religion of the Lord in his country and suppress the false one that degraded the society.¹⁶⁰

It is traditionally well known that at about this time a famous Hinayanist Mon (Talaing) monk, named Shin Arahan from the kingdom of Thaton in Lower Burma, visited the Pagan Court. His original name was Shin Dhammadassi. Anawrahta being impressed by his personality and profound knowledge of Buddhism engaged him to start missionary work in his kingdom and convert the people to the right path. Shin Arahan's preachings brought opposition from the Ari priesthood who lost their gains and honour. In order to put an end to the Ari influence Anawrahta took drastic measures and 'unfroked the thirty Ari lords and their sixty thousand followers and enrolled them among his spearmen and lancers and elephant dung-sweepers'. For giving proper instruction to the people on the true doctrine he extended his patronage to the new Buddhist preacher and sought to build a library

of the sacred books of Buddhism in the capital. In this enterprise he received the guidance from Shin Arahán himself, who advised him to procure copies of the Tripitaka ('Three Baskets of the Law')¹⁶¹ of the Pali canon, from the southern Mon country of Thaton.¹⁶² Anawrahta then despatched one of his ministers to Manuha (Manohara),¹⁶³ the king of Thaton, and possessor of thirty complete sets of Tripitaka, with a request to offer at least one such set. But Manuha ill received

¹⁶¹ Thaton had adopted Buddhism from Conjeveram, which in the eleventh century was dominated by Brahminism, Ceylon being then the centre of Theravada Buddhism. According to Burmese tradition it was Buddhaghosa who first brought to Thaton Buddhist scriptures early in the fifth century A.D. from Ceylon. But modern scholars show that it was not from Ceylon but Conjeveram, a great South Indian centre of Hinayana school under Dhammapala, that Thaton received the first current of Buddhism in that century. It was from Conjeveram again that the Mons of Suvannabhumi acquired the Pallava alphabet with which they wrote their earliest inscriptions. It may be noted that during the reign of Jatakuma Siridhammasoka of Thaton Indian Buddhist missionaries Sona and Uttara visited Suvannabhumi which is identified by some scholars with Pegu and Moulmein. (see R.K. Mookerji's *Asoka*, Gaekwad Lectures, p. 33). According to *G.P.Cr.*, (p. 49) 'only Thaton should be understood by Suvannabhumi'.

¹⁶² The tribal name "Mon" is defined by Csoma de Koros, in his Tibetan Dictionary, as a general name for the hill people between the plains of India and Tibet. The Mon-pas of the southern lower Himalayan ranges are certainly these people. 'pa' means 'man' or 'race'; Mon-pas means Mon people. These people are held to be connected with the Mon people of Lower Burma (Ramanna-desa) and southern part of Central Siam (Dvaravati) of ancient times, but it is doubtful. The Burmans, who conquered Lower Burma (Pegu and Thaton), called the Mons Talaings which was a term of reproach. The so-called Talaings never call themselves Talaing; they call themselves Mon. They are not to be connected with Telingana in South India.

¹⁶³ Full title is 'Siritribhuvanadityapavaradhammaraja Manuha'. He was the forty-eighth king of Thaton and lord of the thirty-two white elephants, the founder of Suvannabhumi (Thaton) being Siharajah (Simha Rajah). Upadeva, the sixth in descent from Siharajah, founded Suddhamnavati. Jatakuma Siridhammasoka was the grandson of Upadeva.

the minister and discourteously rejected the request. At this Anawrahta marched with a large army and four generals and invaded Thaton in 1057 and occupied it. He also captured king Manuha with his family and ministers. Anawrahta then carried away to his capital the sacred relics which were kept in a jewelled casket and worshipped by a line of kings in Thaton, and also the thirty sets of Pitakas by loading them on the thirty-two white elephants of the king. He also transferred to Pagan thirty thousand souls including men of valour, nobles of the court and the monks and also elephants, horses, artisans including forgers of cannon and masket. At Pagan a special library building, called the Tripitakataik, was constructed to house the Pitakas.

The conquest of Thaton, the Indianized suvarnabhumi,¹⁶⁴ soon proved to be of revolutionary significance to the Burmese. With the wholesale movement of the Mon population to Pagan came also their men of letters, books and scriptures. The Burmese, who had no alphabet of their own, adopted the Mon alphabet and for the first time Burmese became a written language. Pali, the language of the Tripitakas, was studied as a sacred language. Shin Arahana enjoyed the king's patronage and favour as the chief religious guide of the Hinayana school. Under his direction the Mon Buddhist missionaries spread out throughout the length and breadth of the country to preach the new faith and convert the people. Yet it would be wrong to assume that the Buddhism of Pagan was unmixed in entirety. Luce, from his critical study of the inscriptions of Burma, points out that it 'was mixed up with

¹⁶⁴ Mon name Thaton or correctly Htawtung has the same

Hindu Brahmanic cults, Vaishnavism in particular. It was tinged with Mahayanism, and towards the end of the dynasty at least with Tantrism. It rested doubtless on a deep bed of Naga and Nat worship'.¹⁶⁵ It is a fact that the coastal countries of the Far East came under the Indian cultural influence much earlier than the Pagan period and in this not one but many different forms of culture, particularly religious and artistic, found their way to them. Religion of Suvaranabhumi can not be said to be purely Buddhist. Vaishnavism and Tantrism of India, too, must have penetrated into that land and made their influence felt. Harvey refers to the bas-reliefs of Hindu deities in the throne room of Mahaba, built by the captive king himself, in the Nanpaya shrine at Myinkaba, south of the city of Pagan showing thereby how Thaton Buddhism was influenced by Hindu art and ideals.¹⁶⁶ Hence there is no wonder if evidences of various Hindu Brahmanic cults are found in Pagan by recent investigations. In particular, the flow of Indian cultural influence into the land of the Burmese became easy after the conquest of Thaton, which opened the way for the Burmese to develop intercourse with the Buddhist and Brahmanic centres overseas as far as Ceylon and South India. It may be noted that from the seventh century onward, if not earlier, the Pyu capital Brone, to the south of Pagan, was a centre of Indian religions and culture ; records and relics of the prevalence of Buddhism of both Mahayana and Hinayana schools and of Hindu Vaishnavism being found

¹⁶⁵ 'Burma's Debt to Pagan' by G.H. Luce in JERS, vol. XXII, p. 121.

¹⁶⁶ History of Burma, p. 28.

in it.¹⁶⁷ The Pyu, who had commanded the Irrawaddy valley from Prome to Halin at one time or other in the past before their subjugation by Nan-Chao, must have left traces of their achievements and cultural features in that region. Hence it is no wonder that a mixed religion was found in Pagan in the beginning, though Hinayana Buddhism ultimately triumphed. In this background, it may be reasonably assumed that the Tai communities of Yun-nan and Burma were already more or less acquainted with the Indian religious systems and thoughts even before their great movements in the thirteenth century.

In 419 B.E. (A.D. 1057), according to the Hsen-Wi Chronicle, Anawrahta also made a journey to "the Tarop country of the kingdom of Gandhala", which was the kingdom of Nan-Chao in Yun-nan, to ask the Tarop Utibwa¹⁶⁸ for the Lord's holy tooth¹⁶⁹ possessed by the latter. According to the Glass Palace Chronicle he marched to Gandhala with elephants, horses and fighting men. He had, however, to return without being able to get the real tooth, but with an understanding between the two monarches. On way back, he entered the Tai State of Mong-Mao and met Sao-Hom-mong 'the ruler of the nine provinces of Mao'.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁸ meaning Emperor, Uti is possibly the Chinese title meaning 'Emperor' and bwa, a form of Hpa, hence the word Utibwa refers to the king of Nan-Chao who was a Tai king. E.H. Parkar is of the opinion that Anawrahta's famous visit to China in quest of the Buddha's tooth took him no further than the independent State of Nan-Chao, then called the Tayok country. (GUESS, 1.1, pp. 196). But it is noteworthy that the Utibwa worshipped both Buddha and Sandi.

¹⁶⁹ According to the Glass Palace Chronicle. But the Hsen-Wi Chronicle mentions 'the five relics of Buddha'.

¹⁷⁰ G.P. Cr., p.85. As can be gathered from the records of the Hsen-Wi Chronicle the nine provinces appear to be the following :- Mong-Mao, Mong-Na, Se Hpaang, Meng-Wan, Mong-Ti, Mong-Hko, Mong-Kawn, Mong-Nam and Mong-No.

Sao-Hom-mong was the assumed name of the ruler, his real name being Hkun-Tum. He was the son of Sao Tao-Nga-Run, a prince from Mong-Ri Mong-Ram¹⁷¹ and a descendant of the House of Hkun-Long and Hkun-Lai. After the death of Hkun-Lai, the ruler of Mong-Mao, the Council of Elders-in-charge appointed Hkun Tao-Nga-Rung to be the ruler of Mong-Mao with a few other States.

While at Mong-Mao Anawrahta married Sao-Hom-Mong's daughter Sao-Mon-La (or Saw-Mun-Hla). The Chronicles so far available are silent about the purpose of Anawrahta's visit to Mong-Mao. It appears from circumstantial evidences that the purpose was not to conquer and annex Mong-Mao, but, after his disappointment at the Nan-Chao capital, Anawrahta probably wanted to strengthen his position by a marriage alliance with the powerful Mao-Shan Chief of Mong-Mao. For, there is nothing in the extant records to show that Sao-Hom-Mong had ever to acknowledge the overlordship of the Pagan monarch or at any time after the marriage visited the Pagan Court, which a vassal prince would have to do.¹⁷² Though the question of Mong-Mao's relation with Pagan may be a little controversial, it seems beyond doubt that the succeeding kings or Chao of that country were independent rulers.

The Mao-Shan Princess Sao-Mon-La enjoyed for a

¹⁷¹ Hsen-Wi Chronicle, GUBSS, I.1, pp. 232, 235. But N. Elias says that in the history of Mong-Mao it is recorded that Hkun Kawt Hpa's son and successor gave his daughter in marriage to the Pagan monarch, *op.cit.*, pp. 16-17. If so, Hkun Kawt Hpa and Tao-Nga-Run appear to be the same person and Sao-Hom-mong was Chao-Tai-Hpa, who is said to have ascended the throne of Mong-Mao in A.D. 1050.

¹⁷² N. Elias: *Op.cit.*, p. 17.

time special favour from the Burmese monarch and attracted particular attention of the nobles of the Court and of the common people by her charms. But the queen and the concubines apparently grew envious of her for her position and the riches of her parents' kingdom that adorned her person. They conspired to poison the superstitious mind of the king against her and, on the plea that she was a witch and wore a magic earring of evil omens, they succeeded in persuading the king to order her expulsion from Pagan. At this, she left Pagan with her attendants and belongings for her native home in Mong-Mao. But she became a legendary figure to the later generations of the people of Burma who attributed to her wonderful powers and venerated her memory as a pious and virtuous lady. It is said that on way back to Mong-Mao she built a Cave Temple called Shwezayan pagoda.¹⁷³ In it she enshrined the holy relic of the earring and placed an image five cubits in height. The pagoda was further developed by later Burmese kings.

Next Anawrahta invaded Tharekhetra (Sriksetra, now Hmawza, in Prome) by land and water for the frontlet

¹⁷³ G.P.Gr., pp. 84-7. In it the date mentioned is the tenth waxing of Tazungnon in the year B.E. 416 (A.D. 1054) which is antedated by three years from Anawrahta's visit to the Tarop country.

relic and destroyed the zedi built by king Dwattabaung.¹⁷⁴ He then seized the relic, set it on a white elephant and brought it away.

Anawrahta's religious zeal, when put to action, tremendously changed the political face of Burma. He brought under his sway a greater part of Burma proper. He crossed the Arakan Yoma and conquered northern Arakan. To the east the frontiers of his empire touched the foothills of the Shan mountains. To the south his dominions extended to Lower Burma and included the Mon country of Thaton with its outlet to the sea. Thus he founded the greatness of Pagan and politically united most of Burma. There is, however, no evidence of any wider expansion of his empire in the north owing probably to the consolidation of the Shan power in Upper Burma.

¹⁷⁴ The legend about Dwattabaung (or Dwot-ta-baung) is that on the death of Mahathambawa (483-23 B.C.) the first king of the dynasty that started rule at Prome, his wife, who was in the state of pregnancy, was kept by his brother and successor Sulathambawa as his own. The lady gave birth to a son called Dwattabaung because he was begotten by the two brothers (dwatta is from Skr. dvitva meaning two). The child is said to have had three eyes from which he was also called Twattabaung. It is also said that Dwattabaung, when he succeeded Sulathambawa, 'built a town still known as Tharehkettara'. The capital city of the dynasty had hitherto been Prome, but the new city of Tharehkettara was founded on an extensive plain about five miles to the eastward. The ruins of the city still exist and known as Rathemyu or 'city of the hermit'. Dwattabaung had brought the frontlet relic from the Kanyan country. He is held in deep veneration by the Burmese people and the kings of Burma claim their descent from Mahathambawa. Chinese sources also mention that Sriksetra was the Pyu capital. Thus the Pyu appear to be the predecessors of the Burmese. (vide Chronicle of the City of Tagaung as translated by Mg. Tin and Luce in BRSJ, vol. IX, Part I, pp. 28-46; Phayre : History of Burma, pp. 10-11; Hall : A History of South-east Asia, p. 120; G.E. Cr., p. 83).

Yet the frontier towns and fortresses, as named in the Burmese Chronicles, show that his empire extended to Katha and Tagaung along the valley of the Irrawaddy.¹⁷⁵ He built as many as forty-three towns 'to prevent mixture with the Shan Yuns, who dwelt with the Burmese kingdom of Tampadipa (Tamradvipa or Pagan) and Kamboja kingdom (Tagaung) ruled by Maw kings of the Shan country of Maw'.¹⁷⁶

Anawrahta had a strong desire, in making his expedition to the west, to bring the famous image of Mahamuni to his capital from its seat in Dinnyawadi (Dhanyavati) in the Akyab district of Arakan, but it was not fulfilled as his resources were too limited for the purpose. He is noted for his devotion to the sacred task of spreading Buddhism in Burma and for building a number of solid pagodas of which the Shwezigon was principal. It was erected over relics obtained from Prome and Ceylon.

While Anawrahta was ruling over Burma proper¹⁷⁷ from his capital at Pagan and expanding his domains in the south, in the north and east¹⁷⁸ the powerful Mao-Shans were ruling over a

¹⁷⁵ For fuller details with the names of the frontier towns and fortresses see Glass Palace Chronicle, pp. 96-7.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 96.

¹⁷⁷ It is practically one great plain in the central part of Burma, the hills that exist here and there being comparatively mere undulations.

¹⁷⁸ It is a vast tableland interspersed with rivers such as the Salween, the Sittang, the tributaries of the Irrawaddy and of the above two rivers and also the tributaries of the Mekong. This part comprising the Northern and Southern Shan States is known as the great Shan plateau and is inhabited by the Shans from early times. The area of the Shan Hills is estimated at between 40,000 and 50,000 sq. miles, and, broadly speaking, it may be said to lie between the 19th and 24th parallels of latitude and the 96th and 102nd of longitude. The shape of the area is that of a triangle, with its base on the plains of Burma and its apex on the Mekong river. (vide

vast expanse of territory between the Irrawaddy and the Mekong. It may be recalled that the Mong-Ri Mong-Ram prince Hkam-Tyip-Hpa¹⁷⁹ of the line of Hkun-Long, on arriving in Mong-Mao-Lung (the great country of the Maos) in A.D. 703, made Ma-Kau Mong-Lung his capital. This is the first influx of Hkun-Long's posterity into Mao-Lung. From this time onward Ma-Kau Mong-Lung rose to a premier position as a residence of the king and central seat of administration for the great Mao-Shan country and on its rise the importance of Mong-Ri Mong-Ram began to decline. The last Chao-Hpa or ruler of Hkam-Tyip-Hpa's line was Hso-Lep-Hpa,¹⁸⁰ who died in A.D. 1035 without leaving any male issue to succeed to the throne. Hence a prince named Tyao-Tai-Pong¹⁸¹ of the line of Hkun-Hkok-Hpa, Hkun-Long's fourth son and ruler of Jun-Long (or Yon Lon),¹⁸² was then brought in and installed in that year as king of Mong-Mao-Lung. His coming marked the second influx of Hkun-Long's posterity into that country. He was followed by his son and grand-son Tyao-Tai-Hpa (1050-62) and Tao-Lo-Lo (1062-81) as rulers of Mong-Mao-Lung, these rulers being contemporaries of the Burmese king Anawrahta of Pagan. It is pointed out by Ney Elias that Hkun-Kawt-Hpa - mentioned as Tyao-Tai-Pong and Sao Tao-Nga-Run in other Chronicles - signaled the change in the succession by establishing a new capital at Cheila¹⁸³ (the modern Se Lan).

¹⁷⁹ Kam-sip-pha of N. Elias.

¹⁸⁰ Chao-Lip-pha of N. Elias.

¹⁸¹ K. N. Tamuli Phukan : Assam Buranji (Calcutta, 1906), p. 9. According to N. Elias Kham-Kawt-pha and as given in the Hsen-Wi Chronicle Sao Tao-Nga-Run as noted above.

¹⁸² It is supposed to be Garnier's Mong Yong, the former capital of Keng Cheng, the Cis-Mekong portion of which was later annexed to Keng Tung.

¹⁸³ N. Elias : op. cit., p. 16.

on the left bank of the Shweli and immediately opposite Ma-Kau Mong-Lung. He is also said to have incorporated Rhamo with his dominions. Whether Cheila continued to be the capital of Mong-Mao during the reigns of his successors is not definitely known, but it may be assumed that either of the two places, Ma-Kau Mong-Lung or Cheila, was the capital.

The Hsen-Wi Chronicle¹⁸⁴ presents to us a picture of the Mao-Shan country between the Irrawaddy and the Salween as it was in A.D. 956. As mentioned above, after a period of interregnum, a batch of Mong-Ri Mong-Ram princes was invited and placed as rulers of the Cis-Salween Shan States. The appointments were made by Sao Hkun-Tai-Hkam, the leader of the batch, in consultation with the Council of Elders at Mong-Tu in Hsen-Wi. Sao Hkun-Tai-Hkam himself lived at Hsen-Se, a city which he had rebuilt with his son Sao Hkun-Hkam-Hsen-Hpa making it the capital of all the Shan States, so placed under him, where State affairs were to be settled. It was a grand confederacy of States or groups of States ruled by these princes of the house of Hkun-Long and Hkun-Lai as follows :-

<u>Rulers or Chao-Hpas</u>	<u>Territories under the rulers</u>
1. Hkun Tao-Ao-Kwa	Mong-Nai, Keng-Hkam, Keng-Tawng and Mawmai, as far as the Siamese borders.
2. Hkun Tao-Hseng-Hkam	Yawng-Hwe, Mong-Pawn, Hsi-Hkip, Hse-Tung, Maw-La-Myeng, Hwang-Wawn, Lai-Sak-Sam-Ka, Yaw-Kung, and Mong-Pai.

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 3. Hkun Tao-Nga-Run | Mong-Hao, Mong-Na, SeHpang,
Mong-Wan, Mong-Ti, Mong-Hke,
and Mong-Kawn. |
| 4. Hkun Hpa Wun-Ton | Mong-Ting, Mong-Ching, Kung-
Ma, and Mong-Mong. |
| 5. Hkun Tao-Lu-Lo | Mong-Ham, Mong-Yawng, and
Mong-Hkattra. |
| 6. Hkun Pawng-Hpa | Wing-Hao. |
| 7. Hkun Hseng-Pawng | Mong-Kun-Kwoi and Lam-palam. |
| 8. Hkun Pan-Pse-Long | Mong-Kut, Mong-Long, and Hsum-Hsai. |
| 9. Hkun Hkam-Hsen | Keng-Lao, Man-Maw, Keng-Leng,
Mong-Yang, and Mong-Kawng. |
| 10. Tao-Hkun-Wen | Mong-Yuk, Mong-Yin, Mong-Maw,
Mong-Tai, and Mong-Ham. |

Most of the above districts are in the present region of Northern and Southern Shan States of Burma. The above Mong-Ri Mong-Ram princes, sent by Hkun-Lu-Hkam, assumed charge of those districts in their respective States and built many towns and palances in addition to those that were already there. By 319 B.E. (A.D. 957) two very important cities, namely, Hsen-Se and Hsen-Wi rose to be the headquarters of two groups of towns and districts of the Shan country. Under the direct control of Sao Hkun-Tai-Hkam of Hsen-Se were placed Mong-Hsi-Paw, Mong-Hko, Mong-Lao, Lawk-Sawk, Mong-Nawng, Mong-Sang, Mong-Lon, Mong-Mong, Mong-Kung, Lai-Hka, Mong-Peng, Mong-Hsu, Mong-Hu and Mong-Pat. Another group, namely, Man-Se Memong, Mong-Yaw, Mong-Htam, Mong-Ya, Mong-Ko, Mong-Wan, Mong-Kek, Mong-Si, Mong-Hka, Ko-Kang, Mong-Paw and Mong-Lawng, was placed under the direct control of Hkun-Ai-Hawm of Mong-Tu in Hsen-Wi. Tao-Hkun-Wen of Wing-Nan-Mong-Yin managed the affairs of Mong-Yuk, Mong-Tat, Mong-Hao and Mong-Noi.

Another State of some significance was Moniet, of which the Shan name is Mong-Mit. In a Burmese work, entitled Zabu-Oke-Saung, the ancient name of the State is given as Mong-Mit-kup-king-nau. Ney Elias says that the adopted Pali name was probably Thiri-Rata (Sri Rashtra). At times Mong-Mit included the whole of the country between the left bank of the Irrawaddy and Kusambi or the provinces of Mong-Hao proper, as far north as the territory of the Hkamti Shans comprising the Sawbwaship of Rhamo. It appears from the Hsen-Wi Chronicle that Hkun-Hkam-Hken-Hpa or Hkun-Hkam-Hsen-Hpa, the son of the Mong-Pi Mong-Ram prince Sao Hkun-Tai-Hkam of Hsen-Se, was appointed as ruler of Mong-Mit Keng-Lao¹⁸⁵ with capital at Keng-Lao. He had three sons named Ta-Ka, Hkun-Yi-Awang and Hkun-Sam-Hso. Sao Hkun-Ta-Ka succeeded to the throne on the death of his father and removed his capital from Keng-Lao to Sung-Ko or Singu. Hkun-Hkam-Pawng-Hpa of Kare-Wing-Hso died without issue whereupon the ministers of that State applied to Sao Hkun-Tai-Hkam of Hsen-Se for a prince. Sao Hkun-Tai-Hkam then appointed his youngest son Hkun-Sam-Hso to rule that country.

¹⁸⁵ Keng-Lao appears to be Kling-nau of Zabu-Oke-Saung and Kup-Kling-dau or Kup-King-nau or simply Kup-King of Tai-Ahom and Assamese Buranjis (see A.B. p. 42, Tamuli Pritkan : Assam Buranji, pp. 8-9 ; DAB., p. 4 etc.) The city of Keng-Lao was the capital of the two districts of Mong-Mit and Keng-Lao. Sao Hkun-Ta-Ka shifted his capital in 1069 from Keng-Lao to Singu on the east bank of the Irrawaddy.

Hkun-Kum,¹⁸⁶ who was one of the most noted rulers of the Shan States, was according to the Hsen-Wi-Chronicle, a descendant of Sao Hkun-Ta-Ka and ascended the throne of Mong-Mit Keng-Lao in 547 B.E. (A.D. 1185). A Shan prince, Hkun-Yi-Kwai-Hkam (the Golden Buffalo Prince), is said in the Hsen-Wi Chronicle to be a son of Sao Hkun-Kum and a contemporary of Kublai Khan and Narathihapate (Narasinghapati) or Hsihapadi (A.D. 1254-87), the Burmese king of Pagan. But this connection appears to be absolutely fictitious, for, Hkun-Yi-Kwai-Hkam must be a prince of a later period to be contemporary of Kublai Khan and Narathihapate. Sao Hkun-Kum's son was the famous Chao Tai-Pong to whom his father gave the rule of the country Mao-Tang.

It took four years of continual fighting before Kublai Khan annexed Yun-nan ^{in A.D. 1257, 186a}. Then, having installed himself as ^{in A.D. 1259,} Emperor of China, he sent envoys to all those countries, that were regarded as satellites of the Middle Kingdom, demanding their allegiance which they had been traditionally paying to the Emperor of China. In A.D. 1271 his viceroy in Yun-nan was instructed to claim from Pagan the tribute which had been paid to China by the predecessors of the Burmese king. Accordingly when envoys were sent to the Burmese king Narathihapate, the latter refused to receive the envoys and recognize

¹⁸⁶ Hkun-Kum does not appear to be a son of Sao Hkun-Ta-Ka. He may be a descendant or a relation, for, if he would have been a son Sao Hkun-Ta-Ka would have a reigning period of 117 years (1068-1185) which is normally impossible. There thus occurs a gap between the reigns of Sao Hkun-Ta-Ka and Hkun-Kum. According to N. Elias's account, which is more reliable, Sao Hkun-Kum was the son of Sao Hkun-Hing, a Mong-Mao Sawbwa, and his reigning period is 1163-1171 which nearly agrees with the Dynastic List attached to the Deodhai Buranji. See N. Elias : op.cit., p.26.

the assumed overlordship of Kublai Khan. But two years later the demand was renewed and this time Kublai Khan deputed an imperial ambassador, the First Secretary of the Board of Rites, with three Colleagues to Pagan with a letter asking the Pagan king to enter into a perpetual alliance with him and threatening war if he refused to fulfil his duties. In this connection it is important to note the version of the Hsen-Wi Chronicle which says that Hkun-Yi-Kwai-Hkam, reputed to be a son or descendant of the great Hsao-Shan king Hkun-Kom, visited the Gem Palace in China with a great retinue on invitation from Emperor Kublai Khan. The latter received him with great honour and proposed that he should go as an emissary to Hsihapadi (Narathihapate), the king of Pukam-Pawk Kan (Pagan), to demand the payment of the tribute of four elephants, eight viss of gold, and eighty viss of silver which his ancestors used to pay every three years or every nine years.¹⁸⁷ He then proceeded to Pagan probably as one of the Colleagues of the ambassador, accompanied by one hundred Chinese. Fifty of these stayed with him in Sung-Ko, his father's capital, and fifty went on to king Hsihapadi of Pagan. But the king of Pagan, in his reckless arrogance and against the advice of his ministers, refused to pay the tribute, put forty of the Chinamen to death,¹⁸⁸ and sent back the remaining ten to tell the Sao Wong-Ti (Emperor) that he was

¹⁸⁷ Hsen-Wi Chronicle, pp.cit., p. 234-35.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid. But Hall says that Narathihapate seized the ambassador, his Colleagues and their whole retinue, and put them to death - see Burma, p. 25.

prepared for war. In this the Pagan king himself took the offensive and attacked the State of Kaungai on the Taping river between Bhamo and Momein, because its Chief had submitted to the Mongols. At this the Chief sought the help of the Mongols. Kublai Khan then ordered an expedition against the Burmese and at the battle of Ngassunggyan in 1277, graphically described by Marco Polo, the Burmese with their numerical superiority were worsted. A series of Mongol campaigns under the provincial governor Nasr-uddin followed against the Burmese till a decisive battle was fought at Kaungsin in 1283 in which the Burmese were heavily defeated. The Chinese then entered the Irrawaddy valley and Narathihapate being panic-stricken fled to Bassein in the south, for which he was called by the people Tarokpyemin 'the king who ran away from the Taroks' (Chinese). He was later (1287) put to death by his son Thihathu, the governor of Prome.

How was the Chinese army composed? Undoubtedly it was composed of Tartar and Chinese soldiers, but that it was also reinforced by a Shan army is brought to light by the Hsen-Wi Chronicle. The Chronicle says that 'the Emperor of China sent an army and asked for support from Sung Ko under the command of Hkun Yi Kwai Hkam. Contingents came from Sehpang, Mong Hko, Mong Hkam, Mong Yang, Mong Na, Santa, Mong Ti, and Mong Wan, and all the other Shan States under the chief Sawbwa, Sao Tai Pong, and placed themselves under the leadership of Hkun Yi Kwai Hkam'.¹⁸⁹ Here Sao Tai Pong

¹⁸⁹ Hsen-Wi Chronicle, op.cit., p. 235.

must be distinguished from the great Mao-Lung king Chao-Tai-Pong, who ruled from A.D. 1171 or 1172 to 1188 or 1189. The Chronicle also mentions 639 B.E. (A.D. 1277) as the date of Sao Wong-Ti's declaration of war against Hsihapadi which exactly corresponds to the date of the battle of Ngasaunggyan. By 641 B.E. (A.D. 1279) the Chinese forces with the Shan army invaded Pagan and the king and his son Hsiri Kyawzwa fled to Pyema Mong Myen.¹⁹⁰ Since then the people called the king Tarokpyemin, 'the king who ran away from the Taroks (or the Chinese)'. In the following year the Shan General is said to have carried the head of Hsiri Kyawzwa to the Chinese Emperor, and the troops returned to their own country. The head carried was perhaps of some other son of Hsihapadi and not a Kyawzwa, who survived a the bloodbath in the south, in which five of his brothers perished, and later submitted to the Chinese. Though Pagan was destroyed Kyawzwa received official recognition as its ruler.

Sao Hkun-Kum (A.D. 1164-72) was a powerful ruler possessing extensive territories within his domains. He ruled the States or rather districts Mong-Mit, Mong-Yang (Mohnyin), Kare-Wong-Hso, Mong-Kung-Kwai-Lam, Mong-Kawng (Mogaung) and Man-Maw (Bhamo), in short, he was the ruler of the northern territories of the Shan country in Burma from A.D. 1185, with his capital at Sung-Ko (present Singu) on the east bank of the Irrawaddy.

¹⁹⁰ According to some it was Ser Marco Polo's kingdom of Mien and the Burmese histories refer to Male by it. It was perhaps Hsihapadi's immediate refuge before his flight to Bassein. The date (1279) mentioned is four years earlier than one mentioned in recent works.

above Mandalay in the State of Mong-Mit, which was larger than the present district of that name.¹⁹¹ In the same period Sao Tai-Pong ruled the rest of the Shan States that lie to the south with his capital at Hsen-Se of Mao-Lung (the great Mao country).¹⁹² Sao Tai-Pong's period of reign is given as A.D. 1172-89 in the Deodhai Assam Buranji.¹⁹³ According to the Ahom Chronicles Chao Tai-Pong (or Sao Tai-Pong) was the son of Sao Hkun-Kum. Prior to Chao Tai-Pong's accession to the throne of Hsen-Se, one Thao-Hkunra was the ruler of Mao-Lung (Southern Shan States) but Sao Hkun-Kum forced the latter to quit Mao-Lung and live in Mong-Lum-lung-Kaoklang from where he later retired to Mungjakali. When the throne of Mao-Lung thus fell vacant 'Khunkum gave his son Chao-Taipung, the rule of the country, Maolung'.¹⁹⁴ He ruled Southern Mao-Lung with his capital at Hsen-Se. Consequently Sao Hkun-Kum was not only the ruler of the northern Shan States, which then extended far to the north and included Mogaung, but was also the overlord of the States under Sao Tai-Pong. During Sao Tai-Pong's reign it was found that the descendants of Sao Hkun Nga Run, to whom Mong-Mao was given, had already failed and Mong-Mao was left without a ruler for some time. The ministers of Mong-Mao approached Sao Tai-Pong with a request to appoint a prince of his family as the ruler of their State. Sao Tai-Pong gave them his youngest son Hkun-Hpang-Hkam, who then proceeded to Mong-Mao and assumed the rulership of

191 Hsen-Wi Chronicle, GUBSS, 1.1, p. 233-4.

192 Hsen-Wi Chronicle, *op.cit.*, p. 235.

193 DAB, p. 215. According to N. Elias 1171-88.

194 AB, p. 42 ; DAB, p. 4.

the State and also built a new capital at the town of Wing-Wai.¹⁹⁵ At Sung-Ko, Sao Hkun-Kum was succeeded by his son Hkun-Yi-Kwai-Hkam, but the latter died leaving no issue.¹⁹⁶ The ministers of Sung-Ko therefore went to Hsen-Se to ask for a ruler and the Sawbwa Sao-Long-Tai-Long, the second son and successor of Sao Tai-Pong, gave them Sao Hkun-Hpo-Hsang-Kang to rule over Mong-Mit Sung-Ko.¹⁹⁷ It appears that Tai-Long, and not Tai-Pong, was then the ruler at Hsen-Se. Probably by that time the old king Tai-Pong was dead and Tai-Long came to the main capital.

During the reign of Chao Taiplung (Tai-Pong), a prince, named Chao Changneyu, son of Chao Changbun (or Chao Changmun) of the Mong-Ri Mong-Ram line of kings from Hkun-Long, left Mong-Ri Mong-Ram with his followers and proceeded westward towards Mao-Lung. He first reached Mong-Hka Mong-Ja (Mong-Hka Mong-Jao) and then Mong-Pa Mong-Hkan along the route.¹⁹⁸ His was probably an expedition. As he entered Mao-Lung and continued to advance towards the Nam-Kiu (the Irrawaddy), Pameoplung appealed to him saying "You should never cross the NamKiu. We were sent down at the same time. We tied up our hairs together. We killed cows and buffaloes and ate the meat together. We are in peace upto this time, so we must always be in friendly terms". He further strengthened this kinship by offering his sister Nangmong Blakhamsheng in marriage to Chao Changneyu. While at her

¹⁹⁵ Hsen-Wi Chronicle, p. 236. There are errors in the dates of Sao Tai-Pong's reign and Hkun-Hpo-Hsang-Kang's appointment as given in the Chronicle.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 237.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁸ *AB.* p. 43 ; *DAB.* pp. 4-5.

parents' palace she gave birth to a son whom the grand-father Chao Taiplung named Hso-Ka-Hpa. The child was brought up by the maternal grand-mother with great care and affection.¹⁹⁹

According to Tai-Ahom Chronicles Lengsham Phuchangkhang (or Hpo-Hsang-Kang) was the second son of Chao-Taiplung (or Sao Tai-Pong)²⁰⁰ and father of Chao Hso-Ka-Hpa, and one account says that he was an adopted son,²⁰¹ Chao-Tailung and Pameoplung (or Pa-Meo-Pong) being respectively his eldest and youngest sons.²⁰² This adopted son was no other than Chao Changneyu, who thereafter assumed the name of Phuchangkhang. It appears that if Sao Tai-Pong had any son above Sao Tai-Long he must have died earlier without being made a ruler anywhere. The Tai-Ahom account further says 'Chao-Taiplung divided his countries between his sons. He gave Tailung, the eldest, the rule of Mungjin (or Mong-Jin or Mong-Yin), Pameoplung, the youngest, the rule of the country, Maolung and Phuchangkhang, his son-in-law, the rule of the country, Kupklindao',²⁰³ or according to the Deodhai Assam Buranji, the States Mong-Mit and Kupling. Here the appointment of Phuchangkhang was made by Sao Tai-Pong himself and not by Tai-Long as said in the Hsen-Wi Chronicle and the date of appointment was A.D. 1202 according to Mey Elias or A.D. 1204 according to the Deodhai Assam Buranji.

¹⁹⁹ AB, Ibid; DAB, p. 5. Here Chao Changneyu's son is wrongly called Hso-Hkran-Hpa.

²⁰⁰ AB, pp. 24, 42; DAB, p. 215.

²⁰¹ AB, p. 42.

²⁰² Ibid, pp. 24, 42. But according to Tamuli Phukan's Assam Buranji Pa-Meo-Pong was the eldest son and in N. Elias's book Fu-Sang-Kang (or Hpo-Hsang-Kang) is shown as the younger brother of Pam-Yau-Pung (or Pa-Meo-Pong). In Tai-Ahom texts the spellings of these names are and *ᱯᱟᱨᱢᱟᱝᱞᱟᱹ* (Pa-Meo-Pong). *ᱯᱟᱨᱢᱟᱝᱞᱟᱹ* (Hpo-Chang-Hkang)

It seems this arrangement was made during the life time of Hkun-Kum, the father of Sao Tai-Pong, for, while his grandsons were appointed to rule the different divisions of Sao Tai-Pong's kingdom, he was to rule another district, called Mong-Hkan.²⁰⁴ Sao Tai-Pong's kingdom included eight Shan States which extended over the districts of Hsen-Wi, Tung-Lao, Lai-Hka, Keng-Hkam, Wang-Kawk, Nawng-Wawn, Hsi-Hkip, Hsa-Tung, Maw-La-Myeng, Mong-Nai, Mong-Him, Kung-Ma, Mong-Mong, Hsi-Paw, Mong-Kung, Keng-Tawng, Hpa-hsa-Tawng, Maw-Mai, Yawng-Hwe, Sam-Ka, Yan-Kong, Pu-Kam, Mong-Lon, Mong-Tiang and Mong-Ching. During the reign of Sao Hkun-Tai-Lung, Mong-Nan and Mong-Yin were annexed to the State of Hsen-Se.²⁰⁵ The Shan country of Mao-lung thus attained to a great size in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries under Hsen-Se.

A comparison of the different narratives leaves little doubt about Sao Hkun-Hpang-Hkam's family name being Pa-Meo-Pong. Some Chroniclers refer to Hkun-Hpang-Hkam by the latter name only. By both names this prince is shown to be the youngest son of Sao Tai-Pong. The greatest Mao-Shan monarch, Hso-Hkan-Hpa, of the Burmese Chronicles (or Hso-Hkam-Hpa of the Shans) and his brother General Sam-Long-Hpa are described as the sons begotten, according to the Hsen-Wi Chronicle, on Sao Hkun-Hpang-Hkam's wife by a prince, wrongly identified as Yok-ka-so nat, and, according to the Tai-Ahom Chronicle, on Pa-Meo-Pong's wife by one Prince

204 AB, p.42, DAB, p.4.

205 Hsen-Wi Chronicle, op.cit., p.238.

Blak-Hkam-Deng,²⁰⁶ said to be a descendant of Lengdon, the Lord of Heaven. A story related in the Hsen-Wi Chronicle says that Hkun-Hpang-Hkam managed to catch hold of a tiger that had killed one of the younger daughters of Sao Wong-Ti of the Gem Palace in China²⁰⁷ and took it himself to the latter's presence. Sao Wong-Ti, being greatly pleased, presented Hkun-Hpang-Hkam with a State Seal and also with a passport Seal, which authorized him to tax all who passed through his country, and he also conferred on Hkun-Hpang-Hkam the title of Governor of Mo Pong Hse Pong'.²⁰⁸ In this connection the South Hsen-Wi Chronicle says that nine Hsat-hte came with the Seals and established nine tolls at different places in Hsen-Wi'. This shows some kind of recognition, on the part of the Mong-Mao Sawbwa, of the suzerain authority of China, however nominal. Sao Wong-Ti's action also made Hkun-Hpang-Hkam Governor of the Hsen-Wi group of States originally placed under the direct control of Hkun-Ai-Hawm of Mong-Tu. Having returned from China Hkun-Hpang-Hkam also shifted his capital from Wing-Wai to Nam-Paw, south of Hpenh-Hkam near Se Lan on the Nam Paw in the country of Mong-Mao. The States or districts over which Hkun-Hpang-Hkam ruled were Mong-Mao, Mong-Wan, Mong-Na, San-Ta, Mong-Ti, Mong-Ham, SeHpang, Mong-Kwan, Mong-Ya, and Mong Hkat-ta-ra²⁰⁹

206 Yok-ka-so is a nat, the latter meaning a spirit of god. Blak flower, Hkam gold, Deng or Neng, canopy i.e. the prince who looked like a golden-canopy-like flower. See AB, p.43 ; DAB, p.5.

207 Here the reference is almost certainly to the Chinese Governor of Yun-nan.

208 This is said to be Ma Pang by which Hsen-Wi is known to the Chinese.

209 Hsen-Wi Chronicle, op.cit., p.237.

and probably a few more not mentioned in this enumeration.

Hkun-Hpang-Hkam had four daughters named Nang-Ye-Hkam-Long, Nang-Ye-Hkam-Leng, Nang-Ye-Hseng and Nang-Am-Aw. He was growing old, but no son was born to succeed him. He was extremely worried at this and started praying daily to the Yok-ka-so nat that he might have a son. One day while he was suddenly entering the chamber of his youngest queen the latter was so much discomposed that the king suspected the presence of her paramour who had just escaped from the chamber. After this a watch was set on the queen's chambers and one night the guard reported that the Yok-ka-so nat was with her. Hkun-Hpang-Hkam then turned the queen out of the palace. The Chronicle says that 'one day she gave birth to three sons on the banks of the Nam Paw, at the foot of a hill. They were named Hkun-Ai-Ngam-Mong, Hkun-Yi-Kang-Hkam, and Hkun-Sam-Long'.²¹⁰ A further light is thrown on this incident by a Tai-Ahom Chronicle which says that 'In Lakni Raishinga, Blakkhamdeng,²¹¹ the grandson of the Lord of heaven, came down to have a bath in a river²¹² and the queen of Pameoplung Nang-Nem-Ap also went there. There Blakkhamdeng had an intercourse with her and she became pregnant. She was

²¹⁰ Ibid., p.237.

²¹¹ or Sao (Ai-mo) Hkam-Neng of Ney Elias and Tyao-Ai-mo-Hkam-Neng of Tamuli Phukan. He was a descendant of Lengdon in the line of Hkun-Su. See N.Elias, op.cit., p.17; Tamuli Phukan, op.cit., p.9.

²¹² The river here is almost certainly the Nam-Paw.

putting up with her father, Thaokhenlung or Thaokhenmong. In Lakni, Mungmut²¹³ Shukhanpha the great was born'. The cause of her putting up with her father, according to the Deodhai Asam Buranji, was that she had been driven out by her husband at her being found pregnant.²¹⁴ Though there may be a mistake of a few years in the calculation of dates in the two Chronicles there is no doubt that the Chronicles refer to the same story.

In the meantime Pa-Meo-Pong (Sao Hkun-Hpang-Hkam) developed epilepsy and died in A.D. 1203 after reigning for seven years.²¹⁵ According to another version he suffered from mental derangement and died by cutting his own throat with a knife.²¹⁶ On his death the problem of appointment of a successor arose. According to the Hsen-Wi Chronicle Hkun-Yi-Kang-Hkam, the elder of the two surviving sons, was too young. The eldest daughter Nang-Ye-Hkam-Long was betrothed to a prince named Sao Wong-Kiang who lived in China. Hence Hkun-Hpang-Hkam's second daughter Nang-Ye-Hkam-Leng was appointed ruler by the Chief Minister. But according to the Chronicle of N. Elias Pa-Meo-Pong was succeeded by Chao-Ai-Mo-Hkam-Neng, a descendant of Hkun-Su and Tamuli Phukan's Buranji says that Chao-Ai-Mo-Hkam-Neng was invited to assume the Sawbwaship

²¹³ AB, p.43. Lakni : year, Raishinga (or Hai-Hsa-nga) and Mungmut (or Mong Mut) are names of consecutive years of the Tai-Ahom Sexagenary Cycle. If 1074 be taken to be the year of Hso-Hkam-Hpa's birth according to the corresponding Hindu Sak (see Table : DAB, p.221) or A.D. 1152 then in A.D. 1220, the date of his accession, his age would be 68 years. Again from A.D. 1127 to 1152, as shown in the Hsen-Wi Chronicle, Nang-Ye-Hkam-Leng's reigning period would be 25 years and not 16 as said in the Chronicle. Hence there are mistakes of dates, pp.237-8.

²¹⁴ P.5.

²¹⁵ Tamuli Phukan : op.cit., pp. 8-9.

²¹⁶ AB, p.43; DAB, p.5.

of Mong-Mao by its Ministers when the throne became vacant.²¹⁷ It may be that Princess Ye-Hkam-Long was in charge till the accession of Chao-Ai-Mo-Hkam-Neng. She left her mark by building a city, called Wing-Nam-I-Mi of Nam Paw (the Paw river). The Chronicles agree that Hso-Hkan-Hpa and Sam-Long-Hpa were the two distinguished sons of Chao Ai-Mo-Hkam-Neng alias Blak-Hkam-Deng. Chao Ai-Mo-Hkam-Neng ruled for ten years and was succeeded by Hso-Hkan-Hpa, the Great, in A.D. 1220.²¹⁸ Hso-Hkan-Hpa's brother Hkun-Sam-Long had already been made Sawbwa of Mong-Kawng (Mogaung) in A.D. 1215 under his father. He then assumed the title of Sam-Long-Hpa and founded a new line of Sawbwas tributary to Mong-Mao. He also built a city on the bank of the Nam-Kawng. He is a remarkable figure among the Maos and seems to have been 'one of the greatest conquerors of the history of Indo-China'.²¹⁹ Heretofore, the Mao-Shans had mostly confined themselves to the valleys of the hill country of the upper Salween and the eastern tributaries of the Irrawaddy, with stray settlements which appear to have spread as far west as the Chindwin and as far south as the upper Meping-Menam. Under his brother, Sam-Long-Hpa is said to have consolidated the Shan country upto Yung-Chang, imposed his authority on

²¹⁷ Hsen-Wi Chronicle, op.cit., p.237 ; N.Elias : op.cit., p.17 ; Tamuli Phukan : op.cit., p.9.

²¹⁸ Ney Elias : op.cit., pp.17, 27 ; Tamuli Phukan : op.cit., p.9. There is a considerable discrepancy in the dates given in the Hsen-Wi Chronicle. The date mentioned by N.Elias and Tamuli Phukan appears to be correct when the date and events of the foundation of the Ahom dynasty in Assam are compared with it.

²¹⁹ See 'The Appearance and Historical Usage of the Terms Tai, Thai, Siamese and Lao' by Lawrence P. Briggs in Journal of the American Oriental Society, vol. 60, Number 2, April-June 1949, p.67.

the Tai settlements of the middle Mekong and the Menam, overrun part of Arakan as well as Manipur, the Hkamti country and a part of Eastern Assam.

Hso-Hkan-Hpa was the first Mao-Shan monarch to dream of an empire over the more or less compact region of independent and semi-independent Shan States between the Irrawaddy and the Mekong, though his successes later encouraged him to extend the frontiers of his empire beyond these limits. After he had established himself in his new fortified capital at Se Ran, Hso-Hkan-Hpa summoned Hkun-Tai-Paw of Mong-Yin, Tao-Noi-Che of Hsen-Se,²²⁰ and all the rulers of the Hsen-Wi States to make their submission to him. On their refusal to submit he invaded Wing-Nan and Mong-Yin and drove out Hkun-Tai-Paw and his three sons.²²¹ They fled to Wing-Ta-Pok in Hsi-Paw from where they made terms with Hso-Hkan-Hpa and gave him the Princess Nang-Ai-Hkam-Hpawng in marriage.²²² Thus Hsen-Se, with the Shan States under it, acknowledged his authority.

Next he turned on Mong-Mit, Keng-Lao and Sung-Ko and summoned the brothers Sao Tai-Hkon, Sao Tai-Hkai, Sao Tai-Tao, Sao Tai-Ting and Sao Hkam-Awn of these States to submit. All these princes except Sao Tai-Ting were the sons of Sao Hkun-Hpo-Hsang-Kang, the ruler of Mong-Mit

²²⁰ It may be recalled that during the reign of Sao Hkun-Tai-Long, Mong-Nan and Mong-Yin were annexed to the State of Hsen-Se which was then the chief of all the eight Shan States as mentioned above. Sao-Long-Tai-Long appointed his son Sao Tai-Paw to the charge of Wing-Nan and Mong-Yin. Tao-Noi-Che, the eldest son of Sao Tai-Paw, is mentioned as the grandson of Sao-Long-Tai-Long. See Hsen-Wi Chronicle, op.cit., p.238.

²²¹ The sons were Tao-Noi-Che, Tao-Noi-Myen and Sau-Pan-Noi. Ibid., p.238.

Sung-Ko. Sao Tai-Ting (or Hkun-Ting) was the grandson of the Sawbwa Hkun-Hkam-Hken-Hpa of Hsen-Se and ruler of Kare-Wing-Hso.²²³ Instead of submitting these princes killed seven of Hso-Hkam-Hpa's ten messengers sent to ask for their submission and spared three to go and report their determination to resist. Hso-Hkam-Hpa therefore attacked them with a large army and defeated them. Sao Tai-Hkon, who refused to surrender, was executed at Sung-Ko. The others submitted and Sao Tai-Hkam was appointed Sawbwa by Hso-Hkam-Hpa under him, first of Sung-Ko and later of Mong-Mit also.²²⁴ Thus Mong-Mit-Keng-Lao-Sung-Ko confederacy broke down and came under Mong-Mao.

With Hsen-Wi an amicable arrangement was made, in virtue of which the Sawbwa of that State accepted the vassalage of Mong-Mao and agreed to send a princess periodically to the harem of the Mao king.

Having thus dealt with the Shan States immediately to the south of Mong-Mao he prepared a powerful expedition against the Chinese in the north. The reason was probably, as recorded in the south Hsen-Wi Chronicle, that the Chinese had made an attack on Se Ran which, however, was repulsed by the Mao-Shans. Sao Hso-Hkam-Hpa then marched at the head of his expedition against the Se Sung-Tu²²⁵ of China and conquered

²²³ The Mong-Ri Mong-Ram Prince Hkun-Hkam-Pawng-Hpa, who was appointed ruler of Kare-Wing-Hso, died without issue. Then on application from the Ministers Sao Hkun-Tai-Hkam of Hsen-Se appointed Hkun-Sam-Hso, the youngest son of Sao Hkam-Hken-Hpa, as its ruler. Hkun-Sam-Hso's son and successor was Hken-Hpa, as its ruler. Hkun-Sam-Hso's son and successor was Hkun-Ting who then assumed the title of Sao Tai-Ting. See Hsen-Wi Chronicle, op.cit., pp. 232-33, 239.

²²⁴ Ibid., p. 239.

²²⁵ Sung-tu is said to be the Tsung-tuh or Governor-General of Yun-Kuei. Se Sung-Tu is probably the capital of the

it. He then advanced to Mong Se Long²²⁶ with a force of four hundred thousand men. According to Ney Elias's Chronicle Sam-Long-Hpa was the Commander-in-chief of the Yun-nan expedition and conquered Mong-Ti (Nan Tien), Momien (Teng-Yueh) and Wan-Chang (Yung-Chang) in that region.²²⁷ But Hsen-Wi Chronicle says that Sao Wong-Ti enquired what Hso-Hkan-Hpa wanted and 'surrendered Mong Se Yung, Sang Mu, and Aw Pu Kat', and this ended the war with China.²²⁸ While the Mao king was away his ministers invaded Kung-Ma where they captured the Sawbwa and put him to death at Tima. Among the countries or States which Shan legends claim acknowledged the supremacy of Mong-Mao the name of Tai-Lai is mentioned which is identified with Ta-li-fu by modern writers. If so, then Hso-Hkan-Hpa's expedition advanced up to Ta-li-fu and conquered it. Thus the whole region extending from the border of Mong-Mao to Ta-li-fu of Nan-Chao was brought under the Mao power. Scott notes that the Tai kingdom of Ta-li acknowledged allegiance to the Mao king before its fall in A.D. 1253.²²⁹

Returning from Ta-li Hso-Hkan-Hpa raised another army and marched to the south. He invaded Lan-Sang, Keng-Hsen, Keng-Hung, Keng-Tung, La-Song, La-Pong, La-Hkong, Mong-Hawng, and Hpahsa-Tawng, east of Keng-Mai (Chieng-Mai) and conquered them all, and demanded an annual tribute of twenty-four viss of gold, three hundred viss of silver, and twenty-

226 This is the Shan name of Yun-nan-sen.

227 N. Elias : op. cit., pp. 17-18.

228 Hsen-Wi Chronicle, op. cit., p. 239.

229 GUBSS, I. I, p. 197. Nan-Chao of the Chinese was changed into the name Ta-li in 784 by the Shans. See Nan-Chao Ye-tche, p. 48. Also Briggs : ibid., p. 67.

two elephants, which their rulers agreed to pay.²³⁰ He then marched up to the Hsip-Hsawng-Panna of Mong-Yon or Mong-Yun, which submitted without resistance, and then he returned to Mong-Mao. But, to his grief, he found that his Chief Minister Tao-Kang-Mon was already dead. He then appointed another noble named Hkun-Pu-Hkam in his place and gave him the title of Tao-Kang-Mong and made him Sawbwa of Mong-Tu.²³¹ At about that time the Sawbwa Sao Tai-Paw, son of Sao Tai-Long, sent presents of gold and silver and asked for the hand of Nang-Ye-Hkon²³² for his son Hkun-Sau-Pan-Noi. They were married and had a son and a daughter named respectively Noi-Hsan-Hpa and Nang-Hom-Mong.

Hso-Hkan-Hpa's next objective was to conquer the western countries and hence he ordered "an army of nine hundred thousand men"²³³ to march against Mong Wehsali Long (modern Assam) under the command of his brother Hkun-Sam-Long (Sam-Long-Hpa) and the ministers Tao-Hso-Han-Kai and Tao-Hso-Yen". According to Ney Elias Sam-Long-Hpa led his first expedition to Manipur, over which State he successfully established his brother's supremacy, and second expedition 'to Upper Assam, where he conquered the greater portion of the territory then under the

²³⁰ Hsen-Wi Chronicle, op.cit., p.239. Some of these States are also mentioned in N.Elias's brief account of this campaign. But according to him it was Sam-Long-Hpa who conquered these States.

²³¹ in Hsen-Wi.

²³² She was the daughter of Sao Tai-Hkon whom Hso-Hkan-Hpa had already defeated and executed at Sung-Ko. He then carried off Sao Tai-Hkon's wife Nang-Am-Hkawng, with her daughter Nang-Ye-Hkong and her son Ai-Pu-Hkam to Mong-Mao and proposed to marry her, but his mother forbade it as they were cousins. He then gave her to a Paw-Mong, Tao-Kang-Mon, who was a warrior of note.

²³³ It is perhaps a customary way of expressing a large number.

sway of the Chutya or Satya kings'.²³⁴ For conquering Manipur the Mao-Shan General probably advanced through the Lushai Hills and Tripura from Northern Arakan and, as pointed out by Robinson in his Account of Assam (p. 160) reached the capital of Cachar and captured it, and 'returning thence he descended into the Manipur valley'. In undertaking the latter expedition he marched with a victorious army by the way of the Mali valley into Hkamti (Hkamti Long), then ruled by the Aihlan Hkamyang Shans who had found their way to that country from Hkaoko Mao Lon²³⁵ in the Shan States of Burma.²³⁶ It was during the reign of one of their Sawbwas named Sao Heng-Nyi that Hkamti attracted the attention of the powerful Mogaung Sawbwa who was locally known as Sao Sam-Lon-Mung.²³⁷ Sam-Long-Hpa occupied Hkamti and established there the rule of the Paklongs,²³⁸ who had accompanied him from Mogaung. From there he returned home via Assam and the Hukong Valley.²³⁹

234 N. Elias : op. cit., p. 18.

235 Hkao : Transparent, Hkao ; bright, Mao : Nam-Mao, Long (or Lon) ; great. Here two rivers are meant-Hkao-Hkao and Nam-Mao. The Hkao Hkao stream falls into the Nam-Mao. Thus it means the valleys of these two rivers in the neighbourhood of Mong-Mao. People of Chelan (Se Ran or Se Lan) are said to use the water of the Hkao-Hkao.

236 'History of Putao' by J. T. O. Barnard in JBR, vol. XV, Part II, pp. 137-38. Putao is a plain district in Hkamti Long. This area was earlier under the rule of Tibetan princes but later occupied by the Shans. This change might have been one of the effects of Ko-lo-feng's victory over the Tibetans. It is said there were as many as sixteen thousand villages in the plain. The local inhabitants were the people whom the Shans call Kang, Langhkal, Nokkyo, Yoya and Tawhawng.

237 Sam-Long-Hpa is also known by various names such as Chau-Sam-Long (Sao Sam-Long), Sao Sam-Lon-Mung and Sao Sam-Long-Hkumeng.

238 said to be called also Tai Palong or Plong. These are a section of the Tai who live mostly in the Hills of Yun-nan to the east of Mong-Mao.

239 Barnard : ibid., p. 138.

But from Hkamti he entered the Chutiya kingdom and found that there was no king on the throne. The last Chutiya king called Lekroy Raja died leaving four sons named respectively Burora, Maisura, Kolita and Kossi Raja, but before the succession had been fixed Sam-Long-Hpa arrived with a Mao army. The brothers being divided among themselves made only a feeble resistance. Burora, surnamed Buruk, was killed in battle with the Mao-Shans; Maisura, probably Mohishura but surnamed Maikron, fled with a number of followers to Maing-Bing which is said to be a place near the present Visvanath in the district of Darrang; Kolita, with a considerable force of his countrymen, also fled westward across the mountains near the Sri Lohit and established a kingdom to the north-east of Assam proper; the fourth brother, Kossi Raja, was captured by the Shans but was spared and appointed as a feudatory chief under a Tamon or Governor whom Sam-Long-Hpa placed on the Chutiya throne and then left that country.²⁴⁰ Regarding this invasion of the Chutiya kingdom in Eastern Assam, a reference to which by Ney Elias has already been

²⁴⁰ N. Elias : *op. cit.*, pp. 61-62. This account of the Chutiya kingdom is derived by N. Elias from an Assamese manuscript work found in possession of the king of Burma. In this work the first Chutiya king recorded was one Asambhinna, who, with his seven brothers, dwelt on the banks of the Sri Lohit or Brahmaputra. During his reign a Brahmin is said to have come from Benaras and converted the whole of the eight brothers to Brahminism. The king gave him his daughter in marriage. At Asambhinna's death the surviving brothers quarrelled among themselves over the question of succession, but eventually agreed to place the Brahmin on the throne. On his death a descendant of Asambhinna named Indra Deva Raja came to the throne. There were thirty-one kings of his line, the last being called Lekroy Raja. Edward T. Dalton also makes mention of an old Assamese Buranji, which he once met with, purporting to be a history of the Chutiyas in which the Chutiyas are said to have entered Assam from the northern hills, crossed the Subanshiri and proceeding east established themselves at Gadiga. (See his *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal*, p. 78).

mentioned above, the Hsen-Wi Chronicle States : "When they (the Shans) reached Wehsali Long, some cowherds reported the arrival of the army from Kawsampi,²⁴¹ the country of white blossoms and large leaves, and the ministers submitted without resistance and promised to make annual payment of twenty-five ponies, seven elephants, twenty-four viss of gold, and two hundred viss of silver every three years. Hkun Sam Long accepted these terms and commenced his march back".²⁴² At that time there were three races inhabiting Eastern Assam and they were the Chutiya or Chutya, the Barahi and the Moran, the latter two being subordinate to the first,²⁴³ and Kawsampi was the Mao country in which, we are told by Cochrane, there is still a wealth of white blossoms at the beginning of the dry season in the jungles near the Chinese-Shan town of Mong-Mao.

241 It is an Indian Buddhistic place name applied by the Buddhists to this part of the country. Burmese officials in the Shan States thought it to be Ko-Shan-pye, which means 'nine Shan States', from the similarity of sounds. This group of small States lies to the east of Bhamo and mostly in the valleys of the rivers Shweli and Taping. Hallett, from Chronicles consulted by him, points out that 'the power of the Mau empire gradually extended. At first it seems to have nearly included the ten chieftainships, or muangs, of Kusambi - Mau (Mao), Ti, Wun, or Wan, La, Sanda, Sa (afterwards divided into Ho-sa and La-sa), Si-kuen, Meng Luang, or Momein, and a part of Yung-chang'. Op.cit., pp. 332-33. Kusambi or Koshampye also refers, as said above, to the region of nine Shan States (or towns) the names of which are given by Burney and Macleod as Maingmo, Tsiguen, Hotha, Latha, Mona, Tsanta, Mowun, Kaingma and Maing-Iyin or Maing-Iyi and by Hannay somewhat differently as Moong-mau, Hotha, Latha, Santa, Moongwun, Sanla, Moong-sai, Moong-la and Moong-tye or Moongti and these are the same as those in Hallett's list. Now from the above there is no doubt about the general position of Kusambi (Kawsampi). (See Yule's "Mission" p.292, also his map in his end flap for the location of most of these States).

242 Hsen-Wi Chronicle, op.cit., p.240. One viss = about 7 pounds weight.

243 N.Elias : ibid., p.61.

Among the countries conquered by Sam-Long-Hpa to the west of Burma names of Kunung-Kuman (the Mishmi country) and Hkang Se (the Naga country) are also mentioned in Ney Elias's Chronicle and earlier he had conquered, according to Pemberton and Sir Arthur P. Phayre, Cachar and Tippera (Tripura) in addition to Manipur.²⁴⁴ Pemberton's account says that having conquered Tippera, he marched back across the hills, and descended into the Manipur valley near Moirang, a village on the western bank of the Logtak lake. The fact of Sam-Long-Hpa's visit is also recorded in the Chronicles of Manipur though there is a discrepancy in dates. It is said 'Sam-longpha, in consideration of the extreme poverty of the Muneepoor territory, remitted all tribute, and appears to have directed the adoption of certain observances in dress and diet, calculated to improve the habits and manners of the people, who were evidently in the lowest stage of civilization'. All the above conquests from Manipur to Sadiya and Hkamti-Long were probably the achievement of one major invasion of this western region. Having completed the conquests on this side Sam-Long-Hpa 'dispatched messengers to Mong-Maorong, to communicate the intelligence of his success to his brother Soo-Kampha (Hso-Hkan-Hpa), and to announce his intended

244 Pemberton : The Eastern Frontier of British India (Calcutta, 1835), p.109 ; Phayre : History of Burma (London, 1883), pp.12-13. For the first time Pemberton brings to our notice that the Manipuris called the Mao-Shan kingdom by the name of 'Pong, of which the city called by the Burmahs Mogaung, and by the Shans Mongmaorong, was the capital' and further that Hso-Hkam-Hpa succeeded to the throne of Pong. If that be so, then Pong was just the Mao-Shan empire to the east of Manipur of which Mong-Kawng (Mogaung) and Mong-Mao-Rong (or Mong-Mao-Long) were the principal cities. The word Pong is foreign to the Shans.

return'.²⁴⁵ Hsen-Wi Chronicle says that the two Generals, who accompanied Sam-Long-Hpa, sent ^{ahead} ~~an~~ messengers on their part to Hso-Hkan-Hpa 'with a story that Hkun Sam Long had obtained the easy submission of Wehsali Long by conspiring with the king of that place to dethrone Hso-Hkan-Hpa'.²⁴⁵ The Chronicle further says that Hso-Hkan-Hpa believed the story and sent poisoned food to his brother which the latter ate at Mong-Kawng (Mogaung) and died. In this connection Ney Elias's account is that 'Sao Hkan Hpa, being jealous or fearful of his brother's influence, decided to put him to death, and, with this end in view, left his capital on the Shweli and proceeded to meet him at Mong Pet Hkam on the Taping river (which Elias identifies with Hentha near Old Bhamo). A great ovation was given to the successful general, but after the lapse of some time, according to the most trustworthy account, his brother succeeded in poisoning him, or, according to another account, he failed in the attempt, and Sam Long Hpa made good his escape to China'. About the same time Nang-Hkan-Hkam-Hsau, the wife of Hso-Hkan-Hpa and daughter of the Sawbwa of Mong-Leng, left him owing to some quarrel and went to China, probably to Mong-Se Yung-Song (Yung-Ch'ang) as indicated in the Hsen-Wi Chronicle where she gave birth to a son named Ai-Pu-Hkam.²⁴⁶ Though the cause of the quarrel is not mentioned in the Chronicle, yet, the coincidence of events suggests that it was probably on the issue of the conspiracy to poison the king's own brother, the redoubtable general Sam-Long-Hpa, which she could not approve. Still another

²⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 240.

²⁴⁶ Ibid., The wife of the Mao king left probably for her parents' place in Mong-Leng. Mong-Leng was probably some Tai State in Yun-nan.

account says that a conspiracy was entered into for the purpose of poisoning Sam-Long-Hpa, who, however, was saved by his mother's having got scent of the plot, of which she gave him timely warning by a letter, and which led to his continuing in Assam and asking his wife and children to come over from Mogaung and join him there.²⁴⁷

Though nothing definite is known about what happened to the great Map-Shan General after his conquest of Assam, some further light is thrown by the local Garo sources of history of the time on how he settled his conquered territories of Tipam and Namrup in Eastern Assam. These sources say that one Riga-Diga, who was no other than Sam-Long-Hpa himself as confirmed by the Garo account of his family history, entered Saumar Pith (Eastern Assam), marched through it and established a small kingdom in the area of Tipam-Namrup which adjoins the eastern Naga Hills. He had two sons and two daughters²⁴⁸ who came with him. The Garo sources further reveal that he awarded Namrup to Jap-Jalinpha and Tipam to Sukh-Bonggipha, probably as Governor or tributary chiefs of these two divisions of his kingdom. It is

²⁴⁷ Pemberton : *op.cit.*, p.110. But the version that the line of Ahom kings descended from Sam-Long-Hpa's son Chowmakhun, as said in Pemberton's Report (1835), is unacceptable in view of the clear family history of Hso-Ka-Hpa, the founder of the Ahom dynasty.

²⁴⁸ D.K. Marek of Garo Hills, who is working in this field and from whom this corroborative piece of information, particularly that of Sam-Long-Hpa's foundation of a small kingdom in the area of Tipam-Namrup prior to Chao Hso-Ka-Hpa's arrival, is received through the Department of Historical & Antiquarian Studies, Gauhati, also gives the name of the elder daughter as Ringring-Bangsi who was married to Gringrang Sal-japangpha and that of the younger as Khai-Noring who was married to Bugarik-Samrongchupha. Apparently, if the story can be depended upon, these are names of local tribal chiefs and even Sam-Long-Hpa and his family members acquired tribal names by being connected with the peoples of this newly conquered land where he decided to live due to his rupture with his brother.

also said that Chao Hso-Ka-Hpa, the founder of the Ahom dynasty, stayed at Namrup with his brother or rather cousin Riga-Diga (Sam-Long-Hpa) in A.D. 1228 for a year, after which Riga-Diga handed over Namrup and Tipam to Hso-Ka-Hpa as his successor and left the country/ or retired and died there. As to who the two chiefs, Jap-Jalinpha and Sukh-Bonggipha, were is not clear from the Garo account. But it is well-known from Assamese Buranjis, as also from tradition, that the area of Tipam-Namrup was inhabited by the Maran and Barahi tribes from ancient times and Chao Hso-Ka-Hpa, who arrived from Mao-Lung next to Sam-Long-Hpa, found this area almost solely inhabited by these tribes. It is significant that the chiefs of these tribes - Badaucha of the Matakas (or Marans) and Thakumtha of the Barahis - accepted Chao Hso-Ka-Hpa as their king without any resistance. It may be that the Garo account refers to these tributary chiefs under different names. These tribes must have already submitted to Sam-Long-Hpa as a corollary to the subjugation of the Chutiyas by the latter.

It may be recalled that the Governor, appointed by Sam-Long-Hpa to manage the administration of the Chutiya kingdom, could not continue long in his office. After five months of his rule the feudatory Kossi Raja poisoned him to death and then seized the power. When this news reached the Shan capital, a strong force under the command of Chao Hso-Ka-Hpa²⁴⁹ was despatched to punish the subverter. The force appeared in the Chutiya kingdom after a period of six months of Kossi Raja's rule.

²⁴⁹ Chao-kaa-pha of Ney Elias who says that he was 'the younger brother or cousin of the Mogaung tsaubwa, but the name and event, taken together, appear to establish him as the son of Fu-Sang-Kang of Momiet'. *Op.cit.*, p.62.

Chao Hso-Ka-Hpa is said to be the same prince as founded later the Ahom dynasty of Assam. Kossi Raja was defeated by Chao Hso-Ka-Hpa and obliged to take refuge in Cachar and the Chatiya country finally brought under the great Mao-Shan Empire.

After the conquests of Mong-Wehsali-Long Hso-Hkan-Hpa next ordered another expedition against Mong-Man (Burma) and gave the command to his two sons Sao Sau-Pyem-Hpa and Sao Ngok-Kyo-Hpa, together with the veteran generals Tao-Hso-Yen, Tao Hso-Han-Kai, and Tao-Hpa-Prao. The command was so given probably in the absence of Sam-Long-Hpa.²⁵⁰ They invaded the Pagan empire (Mong-Man) from the north and first of all captured Wing-Takawng (Tagaung). The Burmese ruler of Takawng Sao Hsihapadi fled to Wing-Hsaching (Sagaing) and put himself under the protection of Sao Yun, who was called also Hsato-Min-Pyu. The Shan army advanced on Sagaing and Hsato-Min-Pyu fled immediately and was followed by Sao Hsihapadi of Takaung.²⁵¹ The Shan troops then crossed the Nam-Kiu (the Irrawaddy) and took Pin-Ya and captured its ruler Nalasu, whom they carried off as prisoner to Mong-Mao, where he was afterwards called Mawpaming.²⁵² The dates in the Burmese Era are here definitely inaccurate. But the fact that the Mao-Shans annexed the northern part of the Pagan empire from Tagaung to Pin-Ya seems indisputable. It appears from contemporary Burmese history that at the time of this Mao-Shan invasion of Burma Kyaswa (1234-50)

²⁵⁰ Hsen-Wi Chronicle, op.cit., p.240.

²⁵¹ Ibid., p. 240.

²⁵² or Mao-pye-min. Ibid. He does not seem to be the grandson of Kyawswa of Pagan who ruled at Pin-Ya during 1324-43 according to the dates of the Chronicle.

was reigning at Pagan and his grandson Sao Hsihapadi was Governor of the extreme northern province of Tagaung. Hsato-Min-Pyu, who was then the Governor of Sagaing, was no other than the son of Sao Hsihapadi. Hsen-Wi Chronicle says that Sao Hsihapadi was put to death by Hsato-Min-Pyu.²⁵³ Hall points out that when Narathihapate (or Sao Hsihapadi) returned to Prome from Bassein his last place of refuge, hoping to collect an army and mend his shattered fortunes, his son Thihathu, its governor, put him to death in 1287 as mentioned above.²⁵⁴ Thus it shows that Hsato-Min-Pyu was later appointed to be the Governor of Prome. There was a marked decline of the Burman power during Kyaswa's reign. Like his father Nantaungmya, nicknamed Htilominlo, 'he whom the umbrella designated as king', Kyaswa devoted himself more to religion leaving the direction of the kingdom mostly to his son Uzana. After his father's death Uzana reigned for a short period of four years only when he was accidentally killed in 1254 while hunting elephants. His son Narathihapate (Skr. Narasinghapati, 1254-87), a typical oriental despot, by his foglish policy, brought about the destruction of the once great Pagan Empire.

The extent of the Mao-Shan Empire under Hso-Hkan-Hpa is indicated by the countries and places conquered and brought under it during his rule. Such countries and places are

²⁵³ Ibid., Hsato-Min-Pyu means the Governor of the Pyu. At Sagaing he was Sao Yun. After his flight from Sagaing he was probably made the Governor of the Pyu province of Prome.

²⁵⁴ Hall : Burma, p.26.

mentioned by Ney Elias as given below :-²⁵⁵

- (1) Mong-Mit, comprising seven mongs, namely, Bhamo, Molai,²⁵⁶ Mong-Long, Ong-Pawng-Hsipaw,²⁵⁷ Hsum-Hsai, Sung-Ko (Singu), Tagaung.
- (2) Mong-Kawng (Mogaung), comprising ninety-nine Mongs, among which the following were the most important :- Mong-Long (Assam), Kahse (Manipur), part of Arakan, the Yaw country, Kale, Hsawng-Hsup, Mong-Kong Mong-Yawng, Mong-Hkawn (in the Pakawng Valley), Sankring or Singkaling-Hkanti, Mong-Li (Hkanti-Long), Mong-Yang (Mokayin), Mot-Sho-Bo (Shwebo), Kunung-Kuman (the Mishmi country), Hkang-Sê (the Naga country), etc.
- (3) Hsen-Wi comprising forty-nine mongs.
- (4) Mong-Nai.
- (5) Kung-Ma.
- (6) Keng-Hsen, the present Siamese province of Chieng-Hsen on the Mekong.
- (7) Lan-Sang (or Lan Chang, the Burmese Linzin).²⁵⁸
- (8) Pagan.²⁵⁹
- (9) Yon (Chiengmai and neighbouring States).

255 Ney Elias : op.cit., p.19 ; also reproduced in GUBSS, 1.1, p.222.

256 Scott says that this suggests the Mole river, or it may be Mong-Lai.

257 According to Scott these are the same place.

258 It is said to be a principality which had at different periods Wing-Chang (Vien-Chan) and Luang-Prabang for its capital : the Chinese Lan-tsiang.

259 Probably only the northern territories of the Pagan empire.

- (10) Keng-Long, probably Keng-Hung, the XII Panna,
called by the Chinese Ch'eli.
- (11) Keng-Lawng, said to be the country north of Ayuthia,
where there are many ruined capitals.
- (12) Mong-Lem.
- (13) Tai-Lai, possibly Ta-li Fu.
- (14) Wan-Chang (Yung-Ch'ang in Yun-nan).
- (15) The Palaung country Tawng-Peng-Moi-Long.
- (16) Sang-hpo (Sing-pho or the Kachin country).
- (17) The Karen country.
- (18) Lawaik.
- (19) Lapyit. not easily identified.
- (20) Lamu.
- (21) Lahkeng (or Rakheng or Rakhaing which means Arakan,
probably that portion not under Mogaung).
- (22) Leng-Sep, not identified.
- (23) Ayuthia (Siam). ²⁶⁰
- (24) Htawe (Tavoy).
- (25) Yunsaleng. ²⁶¹

In the Hsen-Wi Chronicle Sao Hso-Hkan-Hpa is said to have obtained the submission of the following States ²⁶² and received tributes from them to the end of his days :-

'Mong Se-Yung, Hsang Mu-kwa Hsi-pa Tu-hso, ²⁶³

Mong Hkon, Meung-Yawn, Kawi-Yotara, Hpa-hsa Tawng,

²⁶⁰ Probably the northern portion of it only.

²⁶¹ Chaliang or Jalieng, later Sawank'alok immediately to the north of Sukhot'ai. It was founded by Prince P'roh of Chieng-Sen immediately after A.D. 857. See Wood : History of Siam, p. 50 ; also Hallett : op.cit., p. 334.

²⁶² See op.cit., p. 241.

²⁶³ the Chinese T'u-ssu ?

Labon, Lakawn, Lang-Sang,²⁶⁴ Wang-Kawk, Mawk-Mai, Hsip-Hsawng-Panna, Keng-Hung, Chieng-Hai, Chieng-Hsen, Chieng-mai, P'ai-ko (Pegu), Pang-Ya (Pin-Ya), Eng-wa (Ava),²⁶⁵ Hsa-Tung, Yan-kong, Maw-Lamyeng, besides Hsa-ching (Sagaing), and Wehsali-Long (Assam).

Thus the two lists of conquered territories are in agreement with one another except a few unidentified areas. Such extensive conquests may be thought to be somewhat exaggerated, and, in fact, the Mao authority on many of them may have been nominal, but there is no doubt about their solid historical basis. "The territory actually governed by Mong Mao", says Briggs, "was probably not greatly increased ; but during the early part of the thirteenth century its armies probably raided all these regions and exacted some form of submission from their rulers".²⁶⁶

The conquests of western Yun-nan right upto Ta-li (Tai-Lai) show that the rulers of the Twan dynasty of Nan-Chao were made tributary to Mong-Mao for a period however short it may be. These conquests also brought under the Mao rule the peoples of that region known by various names, such as the Gold Teeth, the Pai-i, the P'o, the O-ch'ang, the P'iao, the Hsieh, the Ch'u-lo, the Pi-su and others. Of these the Pai-i, and the P'o were Tai who came from the north and the most of the rest went back

²⁶⁴ the Chinese Lan-tsiang ; said to be Wing-Chang (Viengchan) or Luang-Prabang, whichever was for the time the dominant State of the Laos. Luang-Prabang has outlasted Wing-Chang as capital.

²⁶⁵ Ava is a corruption of Eng-Wa or In-Wa meaning 'the entrance to the lake'. See Hall : A History of South-east Asia, p.135.

²⁶⁶ Briggs : JAOS, vol.69, No. 2, 1949, p.67.

from the south and settled in Yun-nan when the T'wan royal family, who ruled from A.D. 1097 to 1253 at Ta-li, assumed power. Holt S. Hallett in his "Historical Sketch of the Shans" supports, from his independent investigation, the fact that in the thirteenth century the Mao rulers extended their dominions far and wide, including a part, if not all, of the modern Siam (Thailand). Briggs points out that the reputed Tai-Yai raids into the Menam valley, then part of the Khmer Empire, correspond well with the unrest which followed the death of Jayavarman VII which Coedes thinks occurred in A.D. 1218 or 1219.²⁶⁷ It may be noted that the traditional boundary between the States of Mong-Mao and Hsen-Wi was the Nam-Mao (the Shweli river)²⁶⁸ and, according to Nan-Tchao ye-tche, the western boundary of Nan-Chao (the Carajan of Marco Polo), which means probably the kingdom of Nan-Chao proper, under king I-mou-hsun in A.D. 786, was T'ai che, whose capital of the same name was located on the Teng-Yueh-Mien (Teng-Yueh-Burma) route, ten days below Teng-Yueh.²⁶⁹

The ancient dwellers in the tract of country, southwest of Ta-li, were known to the Chinese, from the T'ang dynasty onwards, as the "Gold Teeth".²⁷⁰ Luce says that Fan Ch'ao, the author of the Man-shu (A.D. 863), describes them as 'miscellaneous tribes of Yung-Ch'ang and K'ai-nan. The Gold Teeth barbarians

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

²⁶⁸ Hsen-Wi Chronicle, op.cit., p.243.

²⁶⁹ Nan-Tchao ye-tche, 56-61, 67, note ; also JACS, vol. 69, No.2, 1949, p.67.

²⁷⁰ "The Early Syam in Burma History" by Luce in JSS, vol. XLVI), Part I, 1958, p.127.

use carved plates of gold to cover their front teeth. When they have business and go out to interview people, they use these as an adornment. When they eat, they remove them'.²⁷¹ The Gold Teeth are believed to be original Austric-speaking peoples, such as the Palaungs and the Lawas who occupied the whole north of Burma. But in the eighth and ninth centuries A.D. proto-Burmans migrated from the north to the plains of Kyaukse in Burma across Western Yun-nan and the Northern Shan States. In the course of that migration these people occupied, as the Man-shu shows, much of the T'eng-Yueh-Yung-Ch'ang area. Under the pressure of the Burmans and also of the Shans the Austric-speaking Lawas quitted those areas and took refuge on the hills east of the Salween. When the Burmans of T'eng-Yueh-Yung-Ch'ang area later migrated to the plains of Burma the Pai-i (Tai) took possession of it. During the Mongol conquest of Yun-nan the Pai-i ("White clothes" or "White Barbarians") massed on the Burma border between the Salween and the Irrawaddy. But the term "Gold Teeth" continued to be used as the name of the T'eng-Yueh-Yung-Ch'ang area.²⁷² Mong-Mao, the central seat of the Mao-Shans, was now the head of all the Shan States from Ta-li to the Brahma-putra valley and from the Tibetan borders to Tavoy, enclosing within these limits vast portions of territory. The kingdom of Mong-Mao was the Kin Chi, "Gold Teeth", of the Chinese annals, the Zerdandan of Marco Polo,²⁷³ which, the annals of the Mongol

²⁷¹ Ibid. p.127.

²⁷² Ibid. p.128.

²⁷³ The book of Sir Marco Polo, the Venetian, concerning the Kingdoms and Marvels of the East, translated and edited, with notes by Col. Sir Henry Yule, 2, 84-106 (Cordier edition, 2 vols. ; New York, 1903).

dynasty says, had not been conquered by China.²⁷⁴ Sao Hso-Hkan-Hpa later removed his capital from Se-Ran²⁷⁵ to a place called Ta Hsup-u about three miles north of the Nam-Mao (the Shweli). He built his capital at this place at the instance, it is said, of a Chinese fortune-teller who had predicted this new site to be a gold and silver field, the object being to have the capital transferred to the Chinese side of the river Shweli at a place vulnerable to Chinese attack. According to Ney Elias's version, the Chinese sent down a party of one hundred and thirty mules loaded with silver and this was scattered about among trees which surrounded the site of Ta Hsup-u, the present Mong-Mao. From the extant records nothing is known of the consequences of such removal of the Mao capital. The great king Hso-Hkan-Hpa, who consolidated the Shan power on a wider scale than ever before, reigned until A.D. 1250.²⁷⁶

²⁷⁴ JAOS, vol. 69, No. 2, 1949, p. 67; also Edouard Huber, 'La fin de la dynastie de Pagan', BEFE-O, 1909, 633-80, esp. 666.

²⁷⁵ or modern Se Lan on the south bank of the Shweli: Se Lan is close to the frontier of China and is about 13 miles east of Nam-Hkam. Se Lan stands on the highest point of an irregular four-sided plateau, which rises to a height of 200 or 300 feet above the valley level and is about a square mile in area. The plateau is completely surrounded by an entrenched ditch, which is in many places 40 to 50 feet deep. It was undoubtedly an old Shan capital built by Hkun-Kawt Hpa in 1035 when it was called Cheila. See GUBSS, op. cit., pp. 195, 221, 239.

²⁷⁶ According to the Hsen-Wi Chronicle he reigned for 53 years and died at the age of seventy-three in 1205. The period and the dates of his reign here must be wrong when related to other events of the time.

He was succeeded by Sao Pem-Hpa, who assumed the title of Sao Hso-Pem-Hpa.²⁷⁷ He ruled, according to the Chronicle of N. Elias, for thirty-two years.²⁷⁸ If this is true, then, during the reign of this Mao-Shan monarch, the Burmese fought against the Mongols in the plain of Vochang (the battle of Ngasaunggyan of the Burmese history) in A.D. 1277 probably by violating the territory of Mong-Mao. It was thought expedient by the Mong-Mao king not to resist the powerful Mongols when their emissaries and armies sought permission to pass through the territory of his kingdom to Burma. Hence Mong-Mao remained unassailed by the Mongols while Pagan was destroyed by them. On the other hand, being encouraged by the authorities of the new Mongol Province of Yun-nan the Shans overran all Burma and seized the opportunity to establish their domination over that country.

The Mongols organized northern and central Burma, which they had conquered, into two provinces, of which the northern was called Chieng-mien and the southern Mien-chung. The conquest of the area that constituted the northern province was completed by A.D. 1283, when the Mongols had taken Tagaung and made it the head-quarters of this province. It may be remembered that Tagaung (Wing-Takawng of the Shans, also variously called T'ai-kung or Takon) had been earlier conquered by the Mao-Shans under Sao Hso-Hkan-Hpa of Mong-Mao but after Sao Hso-Hkan-Hpa's death Narathihapate (Narathihapade), who had been once driven out from Tagaung by the

²⁷⁷ Chau-Pin-pha of Ney Elias.

²⁷⁸ only two years according to the Hsen-Wi Chronicle, op.cit., p.241.

invading Mao-Shans, on ascending the throne of Pagan, invaded and reoccupied this lost territory and raided the Yun-nan frontier, only to be swept back again in A.D. 1285 by the Tartar forces under Nasr-uddin, the Viceroy of Yun-nan, who, this time, made Tagaung the chief seat of government of the newly created northern province of Chieng-mien in Burma. As said above, the Burmese king Narathihapate fled south to the Delta, earning his new name Tarokpyemin or Tarukplyi, only, later in A.D. 1287, to be 'seized and imprisoned', as quoted by Luce from Chinese records, 'by his concubine's son, Pu-su-ku-li (Pu-su = Prome, Su-ku-li = Headman, Chief) at the place Hsi-li-ch'ieh-ta-la (Sri Ksetra, Old Prome) and poisoned to death. Later in A.D. 1287 Prince Ye-su Timur, Kublai Khan's grandson, invaded Pagan and occupied it and the Shans and the Mons completed its ruin. Ye-su Timur then compelled the provinces under Pagan to submit to the Mongol authorities. He reduced this central part of Burma into another province, Mien-chung, of the Mongol empire and made Pagan its capital.²⁷⁹ But these arrangements were upset by the Shans after two or three years.

There was a Shan colony at Myinsaing in the rich district of Kyaukse. This colony is known to have been existing from before A.D. 1260. This was possibly the only important Shan area in the territory of the Pagan empire. The real Shan

²⁷⁹ Hall : A History of South-east Asia, (London, 1955), p.132.

country was the highland to the east of Kyaukse. Hall points out that it was customary for Burmese kings to assign lands in this area to the regiments of the army, and he thinks that the colony may have been formed by a Shan mercenary force employed by Pagan.²⁸⁰ The Chronicles relate that a Shan chief from the hills took refuge at Myinsaing in 1260 and sent his three sons to king Narathihapate's Court for education. When Pagan was overwhelmed by the Mongol invasions these 'Three Shan Brothers' made themselves masters of three principalities, all in the Kyaukse area. Athinkaya (Asankhaya), the eldest, became Chief of Myinsaing; Yazathinkyan (Rajasankram), the second, Chief of Mekkaya; and Thihathu (Singhasu), the youngest, Chief of Pinle.²⁸¹ The Pai-i or Great Shans (the Tai-Yai) of the China border were non-Buddhist. They are commonly called ditthi Syam (doitya Syam?), meaning Shan heretics in later inscriptions. The Tai-Ahoms of Assam belong to this group. But the Shan rulers of Kyaukse, says Luce, were 'every bit as Buddhist as the Burmans'.²⁸² The northern Shans are said to have left no

²⁸⁰ Hall : ibid., p.133.

²⁸¹ Hall : ibid., p.133. The names of the 'Three Shan Brothers' are given by Phayre as A-theng-kha-ya, Ra-dza-theng-gyan and Thi-ha-thu Ta-tsi-sheng. These brothers of the Shan race usurped authority and governed with equal power for 14 years from 660 B.E. or A.D. 1298. (Vide his History of Burma, No. 4 - List of kings of Burma of Shan Race who succeeded the Pagan (Pagan) kings, and reigned at Myin-Saing and Pan-Ya).

²⁸² Luce in JSS, XLVI, 2, Nov. 1958, p.151. He also cites an instance that in 1375 A.D. Kankasu headman of Khammwan on the Sagaing Monywa border compares the victory of king Tryaphya of Ava over the ditthi Syam to Dutthagamani's victory over the Cola Klan heretic Etara, at Anuradhapura, Ceylon, in 101 B.C. (List 6828, 736s.). This is, as pointed out by Luce, repeated in Caw Nanta's inscriptions of 1383 (List 713a', 744s) and 1392 (List 761a', 754s.).

inscriptions, but those of Kyaukse left many written in Burmese, not Shan. The Buddhist Shans of Kyaukse were more or less in secret league with the Buddhist Tai of Papi-hsi-fu kingdom (Chiang-mai).

Kyawswa (or Klawowa), the sole survivor and son of Narathihapate, returned to Pagan in A.D. 1289. He submitted to the Mongols and was allowed by the latter to rule as their vassal. He thus lost the traditional prestige of the Pagan monarchs. The old kingdom was no more. The northern part of the empire was lost to the Mongols, and Kyaukse, the old home of the Burmans and the richest rice-land on which Pagan's economic strength lay, went into the possession of the Shan Brothers during the five years of interregnum from A.D. 1284 to 1289. In the south, a Mon leader of Pegu named Tarabya, with the assistance of Wareru, a Shan (Tai) adventurer from Sukhot'ai (Sukhodaya) in northern Siam, ousted the Burmese rule from the region south of Prome and Toungoo. When Kyawswa succeeded his father at Pagan he had to confirm the Three Shan Brothers in the possession of their respective principalities. These Shan chiefs are also said to have dedicated a pagoda in their area. Their control over Kyaukse gave them control over the food supplies to Pagan. They used this economic stranglehold to throw off their allegiance to the Burmese suzerain. Further, the A-pa tribe (northern Shans west of the Irrawaddy) had rebelled. At this Kyawswa tried to call in Mongol military aid against the rebels and

the Three Shan Brothers. The rebels indignantly said :
 'He calls in an army from China to kill, plunder and enslave us'. They fortified a town and were prepared to resist and retaliate. The Shan brothers, Singhasu and Rajasankram, made common cause with the rebels. They attacked Mi-li-fu (Myedu) in the north of Shwebo district) and Pang-chia-lang on the east bank of the Upper M. Asenkhaya, who was sent to stop them, failed and was captured. But in the fifth month (June 10th-July 9th, 1298), a controversial date, the three Shan Brothers returned with a powerful force and entered Pagan. They arrested the king, his eldest son Singhapati and two younger sons and imprisoned them all for eleven months in Myin Saing, east of Kyaukse, while Tson-Nieh (Sawh-Nit), 'a bastard son of the king sixteen years old' was placed on the throne of Pagan as a puppet-king. 'Ever since you submitted to China, they told Kyawswa, 'you have not ceased to load us with shames'.²⁸³ They put the king and also probably two of his sons to death on May 10, 1299. At Pagan, the three Shan Brothers were called Sambyan, the old Mon title for a senior minister. Their names generally appear together in Pagan inscriptions. They are also known to be the generals, and equals, of the Pagan king. These Shan Brothers also sacked the city of Pagan and burnt it and

283 Luce : Ibid., p.156,

massacred all the Chinese found in it.²⁸⁴ "The Chinese sack", remarks Hall, "in 1287 had been terrible, but the Shan destruction in 1299 was decisive".²⁸⁵ After this, Mien-chung's existence as a Mongol province became untenable. When this state of things was reported the Yun-nan government despatched a punitive force in 1300 against the Shan Brothers. On January 25th, 1301, the Mongol force, with a small Pai-i levy, reached Myinsaing and laid siege to it. But the Shan Brothers, from their strong fortifications at Myinsaing, so successfully beat off all attacks that the Mongol commander preferred to retire in April, 1301 by accepting a rich bribe, with the consequence that he had to face death penalty at the hands of the Yun-nan authorities for such conduct.²⁸⁶ The Mongols,

284 In the Glass Palace Chronicle this tragedy of Pagan is attributed to the treachery of Queen Saw who is said to have been in collusion with the Shan Brothers. It was perhaps to eliminate the Mongol-Chinese overlordship with the help of the Shan Brothers against the fears and obstruction of the weak king, rather than to eliminate the king himself as some writers believe. This may be inferred from the fact that the Shan Brothers permitted Kyawswa's son Sawhmit to succeed to the Pagan throne instead of seizing it for themselves, whatever may Chronicles say about the queen.

285 Hall : Burma, p.29. Kublai Khan died in 1294, at the ripe age of eighty. His successors were weak and incompetent. There were as many as eight such monarchs, some with too short a tenure of office, between the death of Kublai Khan and the accession of the last Mongol emperor in 1333, a period of about forty years. These were the years of religious and political wars and gradual dissolution of the Mongol empire into separate kingdoms.

286 A fairly detailed account of the activities of the Shan Brothers in subjugating Pagan and driving out the Mongols from Burma is given by G.H. Luce from Yuan-Shih in JSS, XLVI, 2, 1958, pp. 150-64.

while retreating, were harassed by the Gold Teeth meaning now the *Pai-i*. This was the last of the Mongol invasions against Pagan. Evidently the Shan successes made the continuance of the province of Mien-chung so difficult and costly that the Mongol authorities had ultimately to abandon it. Two years after this, that is, on April 4th, 1303 the Emperor abolished Chieng-mien province, which was then evacuated by the Mongols. This put the Shans in such a strong position that thenceforward they rapidly extended their power. Later inscriptions attribute the final expulsion of the Mongols from Upper Burma to Thihathu and describe him as 'Tarok Kan Mingyi', 'the king who defeated the Chinese'.²⁸⁷ After having accomplished their triumph, 'Burma and the Shan brothers were tactful and assiduous in softening the blow'. They sent envoys to China from time to time and offered elephants and other products as tributes. The resistance of the northern Shans to Mongol aggressions was no less effective than that of the Shan Brothers, but the former had to deal with a troubled border for a long time after their victory. In 1312 Thihathu, the sole survivor of the Shan Brothers, established his capital at Pin-Ya, not far from Pinle. But soon there arose a family quarrel, in consequence of which one of his sons crossed the Irrawaddy and founded on the north bank another principality with its capital at Sagaing. The withdrawal of the Mongols from Upper Burma and decline of their power in Yun-nan encouraged also the Shans in the far off north of Burma to assert their power aiming at founding an independent kingdom with Che-Lan (Se-Lan) as its capital.

287 Hall : A History of South-east Asia, p.134.

Shan Domination in Lower Burma : Rise of Wareru Dynasty :

While Pagan was grappling with the Mongols in a life and death struggle, in her southern dominions equally serious troubles developed, which were destined to eliminate Burmese rule from them. The people of Pegu had become restive under foreign rule. The effete government of Tarokpyemin lost its control over the Burmese officers in that province. These officers, many of whom married into the Mon (Talaing) families, determined to establish an independent government for Pegu. The first open act of rebellion against the Burmese king was that of a Burmese officer, named Ahkamwun, who was connected by marriage with ^a Mon family. By his influence he enlisted the support of the people, took possession of the ancient capital Hansawadi (Hansawati or Pegu), defeated an army that was sent against him, and proclaimed himself king of Pegu.²⁸⁸ But soon he made himself extremely unpopular by his tyrannical rule and, after a brief period of two years, was put to death by his brother-in-law Lenggya, who himself was killed by another relation who was installed as king under the title of Tarabya.

About the same time there was a disturbance in the country of Muttama (or Mohtama in Siamese, now Martaban) caused by a local political movement to establish its independence. Martaban formed a part of the Burmese dominions in the south ever since the time of Anawrahta and was under a Burmese

²⁸⁸ Phayre : op.cit., p.64.

Governor. Many Shans from Zimme (Chieng-mai) and other adjoining States had come to this country and made their settlement in it. A Shan merchant named Magadu,²⁸⁹ born at Donwun in the district of Thaton, rose to prominence by acquiring wealth and authority. He went to the neighbouring Tai kingdom of Sukhotai in the middle Menam region and entered the service of king Ram Kamhaeng, or "Rama the Brave" (1283-C.1317), who was pleased to raise him from an initial humble job to the post of captain of the guard to the king in appreciation of his merits. He became a great favourite with the Siamese king, to whom he also presented a white elephant which he possessed. This is said to be the first Siamese white elephant of which history makes mention.²⁹⁰ It is said that the Shan Brothers of Pin-Ya (or Panya) had endeavoured by war to obtain the

289 The story of Magadu is recorded in the Mon history of the famous Rajadirit (Rajadhiraj). It was translated into Thai from a Mon manuscript in the Thai National Library. The date 1231 A.D., when Wareru became king of Martaban, does not coincide with the dates referred to above. As the story of Magadu was translated from Mon, he is popularly believed to be a Mon merchant. He entered the service of king Ruang (Ram Kamhaeng) as a minor officer tending the king's elephants. One day when the king was inspecting the royal elephants in the elephant-shed he saw a cowry lying on the ground which was given to Magadu. Later when the king paid a second visit to the elephant-shed Magadu presented him with a quantity of fine vegetables. The vegetables were grown by him out of a few seeds which he had got in exchange for the cowrie. The king was so pleased with him that he was raised to a higher post and in a few days he became a favourite of the king. - (Phya Anuman Rajadon's personal Note to the writer). This part of Magadu's career is comparable to that of Momai Tamuli Barbarua of Assam history.

290 Wood : A History of Siam, p.54.

elephant, but had been defeated by Wareru. Once when King Ram Kamhaeng was absent on a campaign against Cambodia, Magadu eloped with one of his daughters in A.D. 1281 and escaped to Martaban, where he had previously resided as a trader. Martaban was then under a Burmese Governor, named Alienma, who had been placed to this post by Ram Kamhaeng. Previous to this, Alienma was the Governor of Martaban under the king of Burma, Tarokpyemin ; but for disobeying certain orders of the king he was turned out by the Burmese. He then sought political asylum under King Ram Kamhaeng to whom he also took an oath of fealty. Ram Kamhaeng thereupon restored him to power at Martaban and the Burmese Government at Pagan, being seriously disorganized and confused at that time, could not interfere with it. But Magadu raised a rebellion against Alienma and murdered him and seized the post of Governor at Martaban. He then became the ruler of the country and later assumed the title of King Wareru of Martaban.²⁹¹

In the meantime, the king of Pagan sent an army to recover Pegu. The Burmese army encamped at Dala fortifying the place with stockades. Tarabya, not feeling strong enough to attack the post alone, applied to Wareru for assistance which the latter gave, and the allied army advanced by land and water against Dala and forced the Burmese to retire within their own frontier. The two kings, with their armies, then

²⁹¹ Phayre : op.cit., pp.64-5 ; Wood ; op.cit., pp.54-5 ; Hall : A History of South-east Asia., pp.132, 140-41.

came down the river and encamped to the south of the city of Pegu. Here a difference arose between the two kings and a battle was fought. Tarabya was defeated and fled and Wareru at once took possession of the capital (Pegu). Tarabya was soon afterwards captured with the aid of some villagers and taken to Martaban where he was put to death for entering into a conspiracy. Thus Wareru annexed the province of Pegu to Martaban and proclaimed himself king of both the provinces, with the city of Martaban as capital. In order to strengthen his position he submitted to his old patron, King Ram Kamhaeng, as his overlord, and in A.D. 1286 the Siamese king conferred upon him the title of Chao Fa Rua, called Wareru in Burmese Chronicles. Hall points out that this did not prevent him from obtaining recognition of China also. He virtually ruled as an independent sovereign. Wareru, for the rest of his reign, was free from any foreign attack. Later in A.D. 1296, after a regular reign of nearly ten years, he was assassinated at his palace by two sons of Tarabya, whose lives he had spared. They then took refuge in a monastery, but were discovered and put to death. Wareru was succeeded, possibly after an interregnum, by his brother Hkun-Law (1306 ? - 1310), who got recognition from the Siamese king.²⁹² Wareru's death was followed by a period of internal troubles and succession disputes, but the weaknesses of the neighbouring kingdoms saved the situation until, after a number of successors, there came to

292 Phayre : ibid.; Wood : ibid. ; Hall : ibid.

the throne of Martaban a strong king in the person of Binnya U (1353-85). During his reign the ruler of Chiengmai attacked his kingdom and the Chiengmai forces burnt Taikkola, Sittaung and Donwun, but were driven off in A.D. 1356. In A.D. 1363, during the reign of Rama T'ibodi (Ramadhipati) in Ayuthia, the Siamese made a powerful invasion of Martaban forcing Binnya U to retreat to Donwun, to which city he had to temporarily transfer his capital. The Siamese also attacked the provinces of Moulmein and Tenasserim and established their sway over them. Under Thai pressure from Ayuthia Binnya U, in A.D. 1369, finally established his capital at Pegu, which remained the capital of the Mon kingdom until Tabinshweti destroyed its independence in A.D. 1539. Wareru and his descendants and relations ruled over the Mon country for two hundred and fifty-two years (1287-1539).

Wareru's kingdom of Martaban, which included Thaton and Pegu, extended from the neighbourhood of Prome and Teungoo in the north to Mergui in the south. Earlier, in A.D. 1287, Wareru had come into clash with Meng-Rai, the powerful Chief of Chiengsen of the north of Siam, over the frontiers of their respective realms, but in the end he presented one of his daughters to Meng-Rai together with a town on the river Meniam as a dowry and the matter was peacefully settled.²⁹³ His monumental work was in the field of law and jurisprudence. He engaged the learned monks of his kingdom to compile a digest

293 Reginald Le May : The Culture of South-East Asia, (George Allen and Unwin, 1954), p.168.

of the Laws of Manu preserved in the writings of earlier scholars of which there were collections in Monasteries. These laws had been brought to Lower Burma by Hindu colonists. The law-book so compiled is known as the Wagaru Dhammathat (Dharma-Sastra) and is the earliest one in Burma still extant.

Last Rulers of Pagan Dynasty :

At Pagan, Sawmit, a son of Kyawswa, was permitted to succeed to the throne after his father by the powerful Shan Brothers. He was anointed king with great publicity. Pagan Sathingu inscription says that in the summer of A.D. 1299 'when the king appeared in full audience, in the glorious Presence of the future Buddha Siri Tribhavanadittiyapavaradhammaraja' the chief witnesses were 'the great Samoyan Asankhaya, the Samoyan Rajasankram, the Samoyan Sinkasu,' etc. This shows the dominant position of the Shan Brothers at Pagan. Sawmit was just a nominal king and ruled from A.D. 1299 to 1325. He was succeeded by his son Uzana (1325-69), the last of the Anawrahta dynasty. Uzana, according to Phayre, was a son of Kyawswa, the deposed king of Pagan and ruled from B.E. 684 (A.D. 1322), a date earlier by a few years, for twenty years only. Further, Phayre points out that Uzana was adopted by Thihathu, the youngest of the Shan Brothers.²⁹⁴ This appears to be correct.

²⁹⁴ Phayre : History of Burma, No. 4 - List of Kings of Burma etc.

as he succeeded Thihathu at Pin-Ya. In the Dynastic Lists of Hall, Uzana of the Pagan dynasty was the fourteenth and last ruler and was the son of Sawhnit. In the List of rulers of Myinsaing and Pinya, Uzana is shown by Hall to be 'son of Kyawswa of Pagan' who succeeded Thihathu of Pin-Ya in A.D. 1324 and ruled upto A.D. 1343, which substantially agrees with the reigning period of Uzana as shown by Phayre. If the Lists and dates are correct in the above, then there were two contemporary rulers of the same name, one of Pagan and son of Sawhnit and the other of Pin-Ya and son of Kyawswa. Here a confusion occurs. The truth seems to be that Uzana (Uccana) succeeded Sawhnit at Pagan, but, after a short period, left Pagan and succeeded Thihathu at Pinya, the capital of Myinsaing-Pin-Ya kingdom.

Mao-Shan Pressure on Central Burma :

At Pin-Ya, Uzana was succeeded by his half-brother, Ngashishin in A.D. 1343. On the death of Ngashishin in A.D. 1350, his son, Kyawswange ascended the throne. In A.D. 1359 he was succeeded by his brother Narathu. It may be remembered that as a result of a family quarrel in the house of Thihathu of Pin-Ya, his son, Sawyun, founded a principality of his own on the northern side of the Irrawaddy with Sagaing as its capital in A.D. 1315. Since then there were protracted quarrels between the Shan rulers of Sagaing and Pin-Ya, which became so bitter that Narathu of Pin-Ya, in A.D. 1364, invited the Mao-Shans from the north to intervene and punish Sagaing, which was then ruled by Minbyauk Thihapate (1352-64), the seventh and last ruler of

that State and brother-in-law of the sixth ruler, Tarabyange, who was himself a younger son of Sawyun.²⁹⁵ The Mao-Shans readily responded to the call and swept down on Sagaing driving the population before them. The easy stampede, by which the Mao-Shans ended for good the Sagaing rule, also tempted them to sack Pin-Ya itself. 'The Mao-Shan from Mo-gaung', says Colonel Phayre, 'carried war into the Panya dominions, and carried off the king (1364)'. Hkun-Tao-Hpa (1361-81), a descendant of Hso-Hkam-Hpa (Nai-San-Hpa), was then the ruler of Mogaung. When this Sagaing became deserted and had to be abandoned owing to its easy vulnerability to attacks from the north, a Shan chieftain of Pin-Ya, Thado-minbya, a descendant of the founder of Sagaing, set up a new capital at Ava in A.D. 1365 on the south bank at the confluence of Myitnge and the Irrawaddy and built it on the pattern of the Burmese capital, Pagan. It was given the classical Pali name of Ratanapura, 'city of gems'. In order to conciliate the Burmese national sentiment he traced his descent from the legendary kings of Tagaung and used Burmese to write inscriptions. He then started a campaign to reduce to submission the country of the Burmese.

²⁹⁵ Cochrane refers to a short paragraph in the history of the Chinese Ming dynasty (which succeeded the Mongol dynasty in 1368), which says that 'the Mongols appointed Comforters of Panya and other places in 1338, but withdrew them in 1342.' If this is so, then Uzana (1324-43) was then the ruler of Pin-Ya (Pinya). Cochrane comments that this means 'both the Panya and Sagaing houses accepted Mongol vassal titles for a short period'. This part of the history calls for further investigation. (See Cochrane : *ibid.*, *op.cit.*, p.24.)

The Burmese districts to the southwards of Pagan, as yet unaffected by Shan inroads, were, in the meantime, in revolt. He therefore proceeded to subjugate them in A.D. 1368, but died of small-pox while campaigning at Sagu.²⁹⁶ Mingyi Swasawke (1368-1401),²⁹⁷ who succeeded him as the next real ruler of the kingdom of Ava through a palace intrigue, thought it expedient to claim his descent from the Pagan royal family. He was a contemporary of Chao-Tai-Long (1346-96) of Mong-Mao, and Hkun-Tao-Hpa (1361-81) and Chao-Hung-Hpa (1381-1411) of Mo-gaung in the north, and king Binnya U (1353-85) and Rajadarit (or Rajadirit) (1385-1423) of Pegu in the south. He had the ambition to conquer the valley of the Irrawaddy right down to the sea and also to annex the Mon country of Lower Burma. He therefore adopted a policy of non-intervention in the affairs of the Shan States of Upper Burma and refused to intervene when war broke out in A.D. 1371 between the States of Kale in the upper Chindwin valley and Mohnyin. But he was kept engaged in the early part of his reign, particularly from A.D. 1373 to 1383, by the Mao-Shans of Mohnyin (Mong-Yang of the Shans) who made a series of attacks on the kingdom of Ava. These attacks, started with a powerful raid on the town of Myedu in the Shwebo district in A.D. 1373, were continued during

²⁹⁶ Sagu is north-west of the town of Minbu on the west bank of the Irrawaddy and south of Pagan.

²⁹⁷ In between Thadominbya and Swasawke the name of an usurper, Nga Nu, is mentioned in the dynastic list, but nothing in detail is known about him.

a period of transition when there was a rapid decline of the Mongol rule and the Mings, who succeeded, were yet to stabilize their power. The king of Ava, being hard pressed by the Mao-Shans, appealed to the Ming viceroy of Yun-nan for help. To the Mings also the growing power of the Mao-Shans proved equally menacing. Hence Mingyi Swasawke was accorded official recognition as 'Governor' of Ava, thus placing him under Chinese protection, and, in conformity with this policy, the Ming viceroy asked the Sawbwa of Mohnyin to desist from any further act of aggression against Ava. This action had effect and peace returned for a period. In A.D. 1393 the peace was again broken when the Mohnyin Shans took the offensive and penetrated to Sagaing. But they were heavily defeated by Thilawa, the Chief of Yamethin and brother-in-law of Mingyi Swasawke. This major reverse discouraged the neighbouring Shan States to attempt any further invasion of Ava for a number of years.

Occupation of Arakan :

Mingyi Swasawke extended his sway over Arakan. In A.D. 1374 he placed one of his uncles on the throne of this country. On the death of his uncle in A.D. 1381, he sent his son to succeed him. But the Arakanese soon drove out this prince and raided the Pakokku district. At this, Mingyi Swasawke, in A.D. 1404, sent a powerful expedition, which defeated the Arakanese and recaptured the capital. The reigning Arakanese king Naramaikhla fled to Bengal and was hospitably received

there by king Ahmed Shah of Gaur. His son sought refuge in the Mon country. This time the king of Ava placed a son-in-law on the throne of Arakan, but the latter was killed by the Arakanese prince, son of Naramaikhla, who attacked him with a Mon force. As expected, another punitive expedition from Burma arrived in Arakan and a series of campaigns kept both sides engaged until the exiled king Naramaikhla appeared on the scene with a force from Bengal under the command of Wali Shah. But Wali Shah, instead of helping the king, treacherously held him as a prisoner by siding with a disloyal Arakanese chieftain. The king, however, managed to escape again to Bengal and, with the help of another force, placed at his disposal by Ahmed Shah's successor, Nazir Shah, regained the throne of Arakan in A.D. 1430 and ruled as a vassal of Gaur for the rest of his life. In A.D. 1433 he built a new capital called Mrauk-u in Arakanese and Mrohaung in Burmese in the Akyab district and this city was regarded as an eastern Venice in those days. During the period of vassalage of Naramaikhla and his successor, Islamic influence became so predominant in Arakan that, though the rulers of that kingdom were Buddhists, they did not hesitate to adopt Muslim titles and issue medallions bearing the Kalima.²⁹⁸

Domestic Trouble of Pegu :

On the death of Binnya U, the ruler of Pegu, his son Rajadarit (or Rajadirit) ascended the throne in A.D. 1385.

²⁹⁸ Hall : A History of South-east Asia, pp.136-7, 330 ; His Burma, pp.57-8.

But his uncle conspired to capture the throne and applied to Mingyi Swasawke for support, and, in return, agreed to rule as a vassal of Ava. Mingyi Swasawke saw in this domestic trouble of Pegu an opportunity to bring the Mon country to his subjection. He responded readily and his forces marched to the south, took Prome and invaded Pegu, but could not, even by repeated attempts, break the stubborn resistance of the Mons to capture it. It is while referring to these forces that the Mon Chronicles mention contingents of Shans descending from the northern highlands. It appeared to Harvey as a war of Shan migration to the south, but it was essentially a war waged by the Burmese to establish their supremacy over the rich Mon country, an objective long cherished by the Burmese kings. Rajadarit was a shrewd politician and a capable ruler. He had to deal with ever-increasing Burmese pressure, which rose to a climax during the period from A.D. 1413 to 1415. In face of this great danger, Rajadarit formed an alliance with the Arakanese and also instigated the northern Shan chiefs to attack Ava. In the meantime, by way of intervention in a renewed feud between the Shan Sawbwas of Mohnyin and Kale, king Minhkaung of Ava sent a force in A.D. 1406 under 'Nolota' (Nawrahta), his 'Senior Comforter' (Wungyi), who robbed the land and killed the Swabwa of Mohnyin and his son.²⁹⁹ The Chinese Emperor, who had vested the king of Ava with the status of 'Governor', as mentioned above,

²⁹⁹ Hall relates this attack on Mohnyin from the Chinese account. See A History of South-east Asia, p.137.

severely reprimanded Minhkaung for the attack on Mohmyin and the latter 'withdrew his troops and sent a propitiatory embassy'. But the attack was so devastating that the Shan State was ruined and its Sawbwaship extinguished. Mohmyin was without a Sawbwa until A.D. 1416. As a reprisal the Sawbwa of the State of Hsen-Wi raided the Ava villages in A.D. 1413 and 'sent some of the prisoners to Peking'.³⁰⁰ But the Burmese defeated him at Wetaun, a few miles to the north-east of Maymyo, and forced him to retire. At the instigation of Rajadarit, the Hsen-Wi Sawbwa again raided the territory of Ava in A.D. 1414 and there was a simultaneous attack on Myedu launched by the Shan Chiefs of Hawke and Mawdon. Though they were temporarily driven off, in the following year the latter two Chiefs attacked the Burmese with renewed vigour and threatened the capital city of Ava. This was exactly the time when the Burmese campaign in the delta, under the command of Minrekyawswa,³⁰¹ was on the point of winning a decisive victory over the Mons, only the cities of Pegu and Marbaban being left to Rajadarit. But at this crucial moment Minrekyawswa had to hurry back with his force to the defence of Ava against the Shans. In A.D. 1417 this prince was killed while engaged in another campaign in Lower Burma. Owing to a mounting threat from the Shan aggressions in the north the Ava rulers had to give up the conquest of the Mon country in the south. Thus Rajadarit's policy ultimately saved his kingdom from the Burmese danger.

³⁰⁰ Ibid.

³⁰¹ He was the son of Minhkaung by a Mao-Shan princess.

The Mao-Shans' struggle with the Chinese :

Though the Tai were supplanted by the Mongols as rulers at Ta-li in A.D. 1253, yet the Mao Shans, who had consolidated their position to the south-west with their central seat in Mong-Mao, did not give up the dream of reviving the old Nan-Chao empire. It may be recalled that on the death of the great king Sao Hso-Hkan-Hpa in 1250 his son Sao Hso-Pem-Hpa (or Chau-Pin-hpa) ascended the throne of the kingdom of Mong-Mao, and about this Ney Elias's account in the Table of Sawbwas is supported by the Hsen-Wi Chronicle, the dates only differing. Sao Hso-Pem-Hpa was succeeded by his son Hkun-Tai-Pem-Hpa of Hsen-Wi Chronicle (or Tai Peng Hpa or Chau Kam-hpa of Ney Elias) who assumed the title of Sao Hso-Wan-Hpa. During the reigns of these two successors of Sao Hso-Hkan-Hpa the capital of Mong-Mao remained at Se Lan,³⁰² but their dominions in Yun-nan were annexed by the Mongols. Sao Hso-Wan-Hpa was a tyrant and was put to death by his people for his cruelty and oppression.³⁰³ In the Ney Elias's Table his period of reign is recorded to be three years only. Hkun-Ngok-Chyo-Hpa was then brought from Mong Ang-wa (Ava) and installed as Sawbwa of Mong-Mao under the title of Sao Hso-Sung-Hpa, but died insane in about six months' time. But, according to N. Elias's Chronicle, Chau-Wak-pha was the son and successor of Tai-Peng-Hpa (or Hkun-Tai-Pem-Hpa) and ruled for thirty years (1285-1315). He founded a new capital

302 N. Elias : op.cit., p.20.

303 Hsen-Wi Chronicle, op.cit., p.241.

called Mong-Mao after the name of the country on the site of the present town of Mong-Mao. This is the last change of capital of Mong-Mao recorded in the old accounts. Most probably Chau-Wak-pha succeeded Hkun-Ngok-Chyo-Hpa instead of Tai-Peng-Hpa (or Sao Hso-Wan-Hpa). That there was a period of interregnum after this is recorded both by Ney Elias and in the Hsen-Wi Chronicle. According to the Hsen-Wi Chronicle, for want of a prince, the country was administered by the three Ministers, Tao-Hso-Yen, Tao-Hpa-Prao and Tao-Hso-Han-Kai, while, at the same time, a search was made for a descendant of Sao Hso-Hkan-Hpa. A deputation proceeded to China, to which country Hso-Hkan-Hpa's queen had gone while in a state of pregnancy. It reached Mong Se Yung-song (probably Yang-Ch'ang) and learnt that the queen was dead, but had left a son named Hkun-Pu-Hkan. It contacted the prince and offered the Sawbwa-ship of Mong-Mao, but the latter refused it. He, however, suggested the name of his son, Hkun-Pu-Kaw,³⁰⁴ and hence the grandson of Hso-Hkan-Hpa in the direct line, to that throne. Hkun-Pu-Kaw was accordingly elected king, and on his accession he assumed the name of Sao Hso-Hom-Hpa. He made his royal residence at Wing-Ta-Hsup-U (the modern Mong-Mao). In the following year he summoned all the tributary chiefs under Mong-Mao to pay their usual homage, but they refused to come. So he despatched an army under the command of his ministers to compel them to submit. The army overcame

304 Hkun Ai-Puk or Ai-Puk of N. Elias.

the States of Man-Maw (Bhamo),³⁰⁵ Mong-Yang (Mohnyin), Mong-Hkong (Mogaung ?), Mong-Kung-Kwai, Lampalam and Kare-Wong-Hso and established the authority of Mong-Mao over them. A garrison under Tao-Hpa-Prao was posted at Mong-Yang and another under Tai-Hso-Han-Kai at Mong-Hkong. But Hso-Hom-Hpa was hated for his dissolute character and was driven out from the kingdom by his minister Tao-Hpa-Prao for seducing his wife. In this the Sawbwa of Mong-Tu, Tao-Kang-Mong, helped him with a force and himself marched on Wing-Ta-Hsup-U. Hso-Hom-Hpa fled to Mong-Nan in Mong Se (Yun-nan) and put himself under the protection of Sao Wong-Ti. Tao-Kang-Mong appointed his son Sao Hso-Yep-Hpa to be Sawbwa of Mong-Mao. The Emperor despatched a force under the command of the General Wang-Song-ping to reinstate Hso-Hom-Hpa in Mong-Mao. The General not only reinstated Hso-Hom-Hpa, but also proceeded, probably at the instance of the latter, against Mong-Tu, the capital of Tao-Kang-Mong. Tao-Kang-Mong offered to submit and made a present of elephants, gold and silver, which was accepted but shortly afterwards Sao Hso-Hom-Hpa with a party of Chinese soldiers surprised him and put him to death.³⁰⁶

305 Man-mo or Wan-mo (Wan : village, mo : earthen cooking pot), meaning village of pots or pot-makers' village. Buddhistical name is Champanagara ; Chinese Sin Kieh (new street), pronounced Sin-gai in the dialect of Western Yun-nan, so named when the village was first transferred from its former site on the Tapeng near where that stream issues from the Kachyen hills.

306 At one place in the Hsen-Wi Chronicle it is said without coherence - 'By the advice of the Song-Tu, Sao Hso-Hom-Hpa told his story to Narrahta and was referred to the Emperor of China'. There is a confusion here as Narwahta's (Anawrahta's) visit was more than two centuries earlier and was not to the Court of the Emperor of China, but to that of Nan-Chao.

This appears to have occurred at Mong-Tu in Hsen-Wi. Sao Hso-Yep-Hpa's temporary rule in Mong-Mao ended with the arrival of the Chinese force. Hso-Hom-Hpa became ruler again in 641 B.E. (A.D. 1279), a date nearly half a century earlier, when compared with the dynastic list provided by Ney Nias. The Chinese inroad into Hsen-Wi caused the deceased Sawbwa's son, Sao Hkum-Hkam-Tep-Hpa, to flee with his men to Man-Kang in Mong-Kyit. As the Chinese pursued him, he further retreated to Keng-Pa in Keng-Tawng. But at this place he organized a force and attacked the Chinese and drove them back to Mong-Tu where a fighting took place. The Chinese asked for reinforcements and Sao Wong-Ti sent them, but when he was informed that the Nam-Mao (the Shweli) was the boundary between the States of Mong-Mao and Hsen-Wi and the Chinese went beyond the limits of Mong-Mao he ordered the hostilities to be stopped and recalled the General Wang Song-ping to China. Sao Hkum-Tep-Hpa then returned to Hsen-Wi and, in view of further risks of attack from the northern neighbour, removed his capital from the city of Hsen-Wi³⁰⁷ to Loi-Sang-Mong-Kung, and later to Loi-Long-Pawng-Nang and lastly to Wing-Ta-Puk in Hsi-Paw. Here he built a large town and 'assumed authority over all the Shan States', including Hsip-Hsawng-Panna and others in the south.³⁰⁸ From this account

³⁰⁷ also called Mong-Tu by the Shans being in the valley of the Nam-Tu (river Tu of the Shans and Myit-nga of the Burmese).

³⁰⁸ Hsen-Wi Chronicle, op.cit., p.243.

it appears that Hsen-Wi and Hai-Paw were under his Sawbwaship and also a number of other States south of Mong-Mao acknowledged his authority, whereas Mong-Mao's authority extended northwards over another group of States.

In A.D. 1368 the imperial capital of the Mongol emperors, Cambaluc (Khan baligh), fell into the hands of Chu Yuan-chang, usually known as Hung Wu, the founder of the Ming³⁰⁹ dynasty. The incompetent Mongol ruler fled northward and Chu Yuan-chang was proclaimed Emperor. Sporadic resistance of the Mongols came to an end when by the end of A.D. 1382 Yun-nan had succumbed. It is of importance to know how the Shans were affected by it. Parker points out from Chinese Annals that during Kublai Khan's reign all the Shan States between Manipur and Annam were at least nominally subject to the Mongol authority. After the conquest of Ta-li Kublai Khan ended the rule of the Twan family there, but put the king's Ministers in charge with the title of Ssuan-fu-shih or Pacificator and asked them to conquer the neighbouring tribes. Among the early Pacificators or Conciliators were those of Luhch'wan, which included the Sawbwaships of the present Lung-Ch'wan and Mong-Mao, and Kan-ngai or Kan-ngeh, both under the Mongol Military Governor of Kin-Ch'ah (Zardandan). But with the fall of the Mongol power the Shan States became once more free. The Ming rulers, for the first time, came into clash with the Mao-Shans, in trying to control the trade routes to

309 Ming means 'brilliant' or 'glorious'.

the Irrawaddy valley across the Mao-Shan country of Upper Burma and extreme south-west of Yun-nan. With the decline of the Mongol power the control over these routes was gradually lost to the Shans, who came to dominate over Upper Burma and forced the Mongols to withdraw their authority over their provinces in it. The first attempt to regain control over the Mao-Shan territory by a Mongol-Chinese army from Mithila (Yun-nan) was made in the fifth year (A.D. 1343) of Sao-Ki-Hpa's³¹⁰ reign at Mong-Mao. The army, however, withdrew after reconnoitring in the area. The next Chinese invasion of major importance took place in 1393 during the rule of the Ming dynasty. But Sao-Ki-Hpa's son Tai-Long (1346-96), who was then ruling over Mong-Mao-Lung, repulsed the Chinese with heavy losses. Tai-Long ruled for fifty years (1346-96). He was succeeded by his son Tao-Loi or Sao Tit-Hpa. In A.D. 1411 he visited Mong-Hke (Yun-nan-sen), the capital of Mithila (Yun-nan), with his son Sao Ngan-Hpa or Sungampha (Szjen-fah of Parker) either on invitation or for a certain consultation with the Chinese viceroy. It is related in Ney Elias's Chronicle that 'he was given a cup of spirit to drink, which so completely intoxicated him that the Emperor (in all probability the viceroy), at the instigation of a minister named Maw Pi, obtained from him the royal seal and thus rendered his country tributary'. All that may be derived from this story is that Mong-Mao became tributary to China as a result of the interview. It is also said that Sao Tit-Hpa returned to Mong-Mao two years after this event. The cause of this unusual

³¹⁰ real name being Tai-Pong.

delay remains unaccounted for in the Chronicle. The Chronicle further relates that in the next year (1414) 'a party of 130 mules came down from China. Each mule was loaded with silver cut into small pieces, and on arriving in the neighbourhood of the capital, those in charge led them into the bamboo jungle that surrounded the city, and scattered the silver among the trees. The party then returned to China, and the inhabitants of Mong-Mao cut down the jungle in order to find the silver.³¹¹ But according to the Hsen-Wi Chronicle, 'gold and silver fields' were already there in that area during the time of Sao Hso-Hkan-Hpa (1220-50) and a notorious Chinese fortune-teller persuaded the king to remove his capital from Se-lan to Ta Hsup-U (Mong-Mao) on the north bank of the Nam-Mao. Either the same version is repeated wrongly or the Chinese applied the same ^{also} stratagem twice; on one occasion to get the capital transferred to the north bank of the river, and on another to get the protective forests cleared for easy attack with cavalry.

In the year 1415 Sao Tit-Hpa died and was succeeded by his son Sao Ngan-Hpa.³¹² The rise and fall of this Mao-Shan Chief produced a great effect on the fortunes of the Shan States of Burma. Burmese accounts relate the tragic end of this popular and enterprising monarch. With the assistance of his two brothers, Sao Hsi-Hpa and Sao Hung-Hpa, he subjugated the

³¹¹ N. Elias : op.cit., p.21.

³¹² Ssu-jen-fa of the Chinese and Thongambwa of the Burmese. He is mentioned as Soognapha by Pemberton and as Chau-Ngan-pha by Ney Elias, but his accession is antedated by a century by Pemberton.

Shan States to the east and south-east of his country and then, elated by success, marched on and conquered Tai-Lai or Ta-li. The date of this event, according to Cochrane, is A.D. 1413 which is earlier by a number of years. According to Parker the whole story of Sao Ngan-Hpa's conquests and fall 'belong to the period 1432-1450'. At Ta-li he collected a large army from the contingents supplied by the subjugated Shan States and decided to conquer the whole of Yun-nan and revive the old Nan-Chao empire. He then marched with his army to invade the Chinese capital Mong-Se (Yun-nan-sen) in 1441. Under the walls of the capital he was met by the Ming General, Wang-Chi,³¹³ the President of the Board of War, with a strong force. In the fight that took place Sao Ngan-Hpa was defeated and had to fall back first on Tai-Lai and afterwards on Wan-Chang (Yung-Ch'ang).³¹⁴ Being unable to hold his ground he retired into his own country Mong-Mao. Vast numbers of inhabitants of the Shan States that helped him against the Chinese preferred to follow him, rather than submit to Chinese vengeance. At Mong-Mao his army broke up and fled with the civil population in various directions, most of them entering Mohmyin, Hsen-Wi and Ayuthia. In this great debacle he, accompanied by his brother Sao Hsi-Hpa, escaped first to Mohmyin and then to Kale and at last to Ava and sought an

³¹³ Yangchangsoo of Pemberton. See his The Eastern Frontier of British India (Calcutta, 1835), p.112. With reference to the context Yangchangsoo cannot be Wang-Song-ping or Wang-Chang-ping who reinstated Hso-Hom-Hpa earlier at Wing-Ta-Hsup-U. Also E.H.Parker's Burma with special reference to her relations with China as quoted in GUBSS, op.cit., p.270.

³¹⁴ Hey Elias : op.cit., pp.21-22 ; Hall : A History of South-east Asia, p.138.

asylum there. The Chinese under the command of Wang-Chi captured Mong-Mao-Rong (Mong-Mao-Long), offered Sao Ngen-Hpa's lands to whoever succeeded in capturing him, and then followed the fugitive king to Mohnyin which State he also conquered. He then proceeded to invade Burmese territory when the Burmese king Narapati (1443-69) refused to surrender the Mao Chief who took refuge at his capital at Ava. In 1445 a battle was fought with the Burmese near Tagaung in which, according to the Huannan Yazawin, the Chinese general was killed and the army defeated with heavy casualties. Next year the Chinese reappeared in greater strength, marched towards Ava and encamped before the walls of the city. They pressed their demand for the surrender of the fugitive Mao king.³¹⁵ The Burmese king promised to hand over the Mao king if only the Chinese force helped him to subdue a rebellion at Yamethin and capture the rebel leader Min-Nge-Kyaw-Dwin. This the Chinese commander did by despatching a body of soldiers under him, who subdued the rebellion and brought the rebel leader to Ava. In face of this situation Sao Ngen-Hpa, instead of allowing himself to be surrendered to the enemy, committed suicide by taking poison. The Chinese commander simply received his dead body which was then dried up in the sun and carried to Yun-nan. This event is mentioned in both Chinese and Burmese history.³¹⁶ In confirmation of this part of history Hall refers to an inscription at the Tupayon Padoda, erected by Narapati at Sagaing.

³¹⁵ Hall : A History of South-east Asia, pp.138-39.

³¹⁶ N. Elias : op.cit., p.22 : Milne and Cochrane : op.cit., p.25.

which relates how Thonganbwa (Sao Ngan-Hpa), fleeing before Wang Chi to Molmyin and Kale, was captured by the Burmese and presented to their king on the day of his coronation which took place in 1443.³¹⁷

The account furnished by Capt. R. Boileau Pemberton from an ancient Shan Chronicle found in Manipur, referring to Soognanpha's reign, says that about the year 1332 (a mistake of about a hundred years) 'some disagreements originating in the misconduct of four pampered favourites of the Pong King,³¹⁸ led to collision between the frontier villages of his territory, and those of Yunnan'. As a result an interview was held between the king of Pong and Chow-Wong-Ti at the town of Mong-si which was situated at a distance of five days' journey eastwards from Mong-Mao-Rong, the capital of Pong. The misunderstanding between the two countries was removed by the Mao king by executing the offenders.³¹⁹ "The Chinese, however", adds Pemberton,

³¹⁷ Ibid., p.138.

³¹⁸ Mao-Shan king of Mong-Mao, Pong or Bong and Wong, meaning 'Great King' or 'Emperor', appear to be simply phonetic variants of the same original word. It does not seem to refer to the country but to the king, hence Pong kingdom means the kingdom of the Pong. Manipuris referred to the great Mao-Shan empire as Pong empire or kingdom. It is not a Shan term and hence unknown in their terminology. Had it been a country the Shans would have been familiar with it. In Shan Pong is Chao-Iong. Wong appears to be Chinese Wang meaning the head of the State. When the Shans refer to the Wong or Wong-Ti they prefix it by Shan Chao or Sao. George Scott says that the kingdom of the Mao-Shans is the same as the kingdom of Hsen-Se Man-Se and the kingdom of Pong. The kingdom of the Pong is sometimes referred to by the name of the capital or capitals of the Pong. (See Latourette : op.cit., p.40 ; GUBBS, op.cit., pp.255, 270.)

³¹⁹ Pemberton : op.cit., p.111.

"probably, now conscious of their superior power, determined on subjugating the Pong dominions (Mao-Shan dominions), and after a protracted struggle of two years' duration, the capital of Mogaung or Mongmaorong was captured by a Chinese army, under the command of a general called Yangchangsoo, and the king Soognampha, with his eldest son, Sockeepha, fled to the king of Pagan or Ava, for protection. They were demanded by the Chinese general, to whom the Burmese surrendered them, and were carried into China, from whence they never returned".³²⁰ This is undoubtedly the same episode as that of Sao Ngan-Hpa, narrated in the account of Ney Elias. In this connection we must constantly remember the warning given by Parker that 'the Manipur Chronicle is exactly a century wrong and the whole story belongs to the period 1432-1450'. Hall points out two reasons why the Chinese attacked the Mao country, namely, the Kings wanted trade routes through it to the Irrawaddy and the ambitious Mao-Shan chieftain, Sao Ngan-Hpa, was attempting to revive the old Nan-Chao empire as said above.³²¹ The Chinese aggression probably led to Shan unity and their initial victory which threatened Yun-nan-sen. But in the later phase of the protracted campaign Sao Ngan-Hpa had to retreat against Chinese counter-attack and ultimately take refuge at Ava. The retreat appears

³²⁰ Ibid., pp. 111-12.

³²¹ Parker as quoted in GUBSS, 1.1, p. 270; Hall: A History of South-east Asia, p. 138.

to have been steady and according to plan upto the border of Mong-Mao and then precipitate when his army began to break up and the civil population became panic-stricken.

The queen of Sao Ngan-Hpa, with her two remaining sons and a third born after her flight from the capital, sought a refuge among the Hkemtis on the north, probably in the upper Chindwin Shan State of Hkamti. She returned at the expiration of two years, that is about A.D. 1445, and established a town called Mong-Kawng³²² on the bank of the Nam-Kawng, a western tributary of the Upper Irrawaddy to the north of Mong-Mao. The second son of the exiled king ruled the State of Mong-Kawng for three years. He was succeeded by his next younger brother who ruled for twenty-eight years. On his death

³²² It is situated on the right bank of the Mogaung river (i.e. the Nam-Kawng) at its junction with the Nam-yen Nullah. See Bayfield's description in his Narrative of a Journey from Ava to the frontiers of Assam between December 1836 and May 1837. Ney Elias notes that Sam-Long-Hpa, the first Mao Sawbwa of Mogaung, in crossing the river now known as the Nam-Kawng, a short distance above the site of the present Mogaung, found a sapphire drum in its bed. Kawng in Shan means a drum. Ney Elias thinks that it was probably 'a sapphire in the shape of a drum'. The Mao chief regarded it as a good omen and soon established a town near the spot and called it Mong-Kawng i.e. "drum-town". The adopted Pali name is Udigiri-rata (Skt. Udayagiri-rastra). N. Elias op.cit., p. 40. Whether the name of the river is after that of the town or vice versa is difficult to trace. There is also the legend of the Western Shans that in much earlier days Mong-Kawng was founded by the eldest grandson of Sao Wong-Ti at the spot where his gong or probably Kawng (drum) produced a sound of its own accord. Sam-Long-Hpa, says N. Elias, retained the sapphire, and it was afterwards handed down to his successors, and held by them for many generations as a mark of power.

the youngest brother, named Hso-Oop-Hpa, ascended the throne in A.D. 1363, a date earlier by more than a century. He was determined to avenge the treachery of the Burmese, who had surrendered his father and brother to the Chinese general Yangchangseo. He therefore invaded the Burmese country and laid siege to their capital of Zukaing (Sagaing) on the northern bank of the Irrawaddy and succeeded in capturing and destroying it. Pemberton refers to a very unexpected confirmation of this event in the Appendix of Mr. Crawford's Embassy to Ava, where, in the Burmese Chronological table, obtained during his residence in that country, the destruction of Chitkaing or Zakaing (Sagaing) and Penya (Pin-Ya) is mentioned as having been effected in the year 1364, a date which, in the above context, appears to be more than a century earlier. Pemberton further adds that Major Burney also discovered the same circumstance recorded in the sixth volume of Maha Yazawin, or great history of Ava, where the destruction of both cities is said to have been effected by the Shan king Thokyenbwa.³²³ In this reference there is a confusion ; for, in A.D. 1364 there was actually a Mao-Shan invasion of Sagaing and Pin-Ya and it is not mentioned from which State the Mao-Shans came. Since Hkun-Tao-Hpa (1361-81) was the ruler of Mogaung at the time, Thokyenbwa (or Hso-Kyen-Hpa) must have been a ruler of some other State. If Thokyenbwa was the ruler of Mong-Mao, then Tai-Long (1346-96), the ruler of that country, assumed

³²³ Pemberton : op.cit., p.112.

that name. The matter needs further investigation. Again Hso-Oop-Hpa's name is not to be found in the dynastic lists provided by Ney Elias. If he was a ruler of Mogaung at any time during the fourteenth or fifteenth century, it is difficult to identify him. Hso-Oop-Hpa may be another name of Hsun-Tao-Hpa who ruled over Mogaung from A.D. 1361 to 1381, or he may be a Sawbwa of another State.

Mong-Mao was without a Sawbwa for three years even after the death of Sao Ngan-Hpa. There was a search for a Sawbwa and at the end of that period of relation of Sao Wak-Hpa, called Sao Lam-Kon-Hkam-Hpa, was placed on the throne in A.D. 1448. He was said to be an uncle of Sao Wak-Hpa and the nearest relative to Sao Ngan-Hpa among those who survived him. In the fourth year of his reign a large force from China invaded his country and defeated his troops. He then fled to Ava and sought refuge with the Burmese. He returned to his country after five years of exile, but died in A.D. 1461. He was succeeded in the same year by his son Sao Hom-Hpa. The Chinese again invaded Mong-Mao soon after his accession, but were defeated and had to beat a retreat inside their own country after eighteen days of continued fighting. In the later period of Sao Hom-Hpa's reign, that is about A.D. 1479, the Chinese returned with a greater strength and routed the Hsiao-Shans compelling their king Sao Hom-Hpa to take to flight and seek protection at Ava just as his predecessor had done. He, however, returned to his capital after four years and

died after seven years in A.D. 1490.³²⁴

On the death of Sao Hom-Hpa, his son Sao Ka-Hpa ascended the throne. In the sixth year of his reign the Chinese appeared again in force and invaded the Mao territory. After some fighting Sao Ka-Hpa placed his son Sao Pem-Hpa on the throne in A.D. 1496 and himself retired to Ai Hkam, the northern division of Hkamti. Sao Pem-Hpa appears to have enjoyed an undisturbed rule for twenty years. Then a Chinese force from Yun-nan under the command of General Li-Sang-Pa made an attempt to invade the country, but was repulsed. Li-Sang-Pa, being baffled in the open encounter, resorted to a ruse to mislead the Shans. "He constructed a number of rafts", describes Ney Elias, "placed a goat on each, and set them floating down the Shweli; the Shans, on seeing the goats approaching from the side of China, exclaimed Hke Poi Pa Ma, 'the Chinese are sending goats down', a cry that quickly spread through the town as 'the Chinese are coming floating down' and caused a general panic. The citizens, together with the any, fled in all directions and Sao Pem-Hpa, who was ill at the time and unable to move, died as the enemy entered his city".³²⁵ His father Sao Ka-Hpa came afterwards to Hogaung and became its Sawbwa in A.D. 1496. He was surnamed Sao Kyek-Hpa and established his capital at Chei-En (or Tsei-En or earlier Tsei-Lan) to signalize his accession and probably also to

³²⁴ Ney Elias : op.cit., pp. 22-23.

³²⁵ Ibid. p.23.

commemorate the beginning of a new era in Mogaung. The new capital Chei-En is at a distance of one days's journey to the north-west of old Mogaung.³²⁶ He also built another city called Hpa-Kung, now in ruins.

Narrating the history of Mogaung beginning from the time of Sam-Long-Hpa, Ney Elias says that when Sam-Long-Hpa was engaged in the conquest of western countries 'he appears to have been succeeded by a nephew named Noi-San-pha, a son of the Mao king, but who in assuming the tsaubwaship took his father's name, Chau-Kam-pha'. But, as it would be shown below, Noi-San-Hpa (or Chau-Kam-pha) was the son of Phu-Chang-Khang and elder brother of Hso-Ka-Hpa. Noi-San-Hpa's accession must have followed the rupture between Hso-Hkan-Hpa and Sam-Long-Hpa when the latter was still engaged in his campaigns in Upper Assam. In the meantime, according to Mogaung Annals, the following areas had been subjugated by the Mao General and brought under Mogaung rule : (1) Hkamti ; (2) Sankring Hkamti ; (3) Hu-Kawng ; (4) Maing-Kaing ; (5) Maing-Ngyaung ; (6) Mo-Nyin (Mohmyin) ; (7) Taungthwot (Sumjok) ; (8) Kalei ; (9) the four Yaw towns (the most northern of the districts inhabited by the Yaws ; and (10) Mautshobo. All these areas were inhabited by eight different races, which, Ney Elias points out, were '(1) the Naras, divided into Ai-Ton, the Ai-Hkam, and Fakei (the latter were not true Noras, but fugitives from Mong-Man) ; (2) the Khang or Khang-sei,

³²⁶ Op.cit., pp. 23,41.

(i.e. the Khyens or Nagas) ; (3) the Singphos or Kachyens ; (4) the Pwons, divided into great and small Pwons ; (5) the Kadus, a kindred people to the latter, similarly divided ; (6) the Yaws, a tribe of Burmans on the right bank of the Irrawaddy ; (7) the Kubbaw (said to be the Burmese of the neighbourhood of Meutshobo ; (8) the Kunungs and Kumuns, or Mishmis, divided by the Assamese into Miju and Chullicotta Mishmis. These races, prior to their being conquered, lived in numerous petty States under their own Chiefs.³²⁷

Noi-San-Hpa (or Loi-San-Hpa), the Sawbwa of Mogaung and contemporary of Sam-Long-Hpa, should not be confused with another chief of the same name and son of Hkun-San-Pan-Noi as mentioned in the Hsen-Wi Chronicle. The latter must have been too young at the time of Sam-Long-Hpa's western campaigns if he had been born at all by that time. Hence Ney Elias seems to be correct in showing that the Mogaung Sawbwa, Noi-San-Hpa, was a contemporary of the Mao king Hso-Hken-Hpa. The descendants of Noi-San-Hpa ruled in regular succession until A.D. 1443 or 1446 when a change occurred. It is not known how this line of Sawbwas came to an end. Ney Elias says that Sao Hsi-Hpa, the brother of the unfortunate Sao Ngan-Hpa, succeeded to the Sawbwaship in this year and ruled for long fifty years. Sao Hsi-Hpa was surnamed Sao Kwon-Hpa.³²⁸ But Pemberton's Chronicle tells a different story. According to his Chronicle it was not Sao Ngan-Hpa's

327 Ney Elias : op.cit., pp.40-41.

328 Ibid., p.41.

brother, but his sons, who established their rule over Mogaung at that time. Ney Elias's Chronicle supports the fact that Sao Ngan-Hpa's queen went to Hkamti with her two children seeking protection and further says that the children were Sao Hung aged ten and Sao Hup aged two. On arrival there a third, named Sao Put, was born and one of these three became Sawbwa of Hkamti. Sao Hup was probably Pemberton's Sao-Oop who defeated the Burmese and destroyed Sagaing. When the two accounts are compared Ney Elias's account appears to have been written more carefully providing a regular Shan Chronological table than Pemberton's, with this difference that nothing is said by Ney Elias about what countries the two sons of Sao Ngan-Hpa ruled. In A.D. 1496 Sao Hsi-Hpa was succeeded by Sao Ka-Hpa, who ruled upto A.D. 1520. Ney Elias refers to an expedition by Sao Ka-Hpa with a large army for the conquest of Assam. When the army approached the border of Assam the Ahom King offered him large presents of cattle and horses, and he retired peacefully to Mogaung.³²⁹ The Ahom king mentioned must be either Chao-Hpa Supin (1493-97) or Chao-Hpa Hso-Hom-Mong (1497-1539). In the Assam Chronicles there is no mention of this expedition.

Before his death Sao Ka-Hpa completed the work of placing the various dominions of Mogaung on a firm footing by appointing to them his relatives and friends as governors or tributary chiefs. Thus Sao Long-Tu-Mong was appointed Governor of Man-sai on the right bank of the

329 Ibid., p.41.

Kyendwen and Tsa-Tsaw-Yot was made Governor of Maing-Tung on the left bank. He placed the northern dominion, comprising the country of the Hkunungs and Hkumuns (Mishmis) and the areas called Ta-Wi and Ta-Wai, under the governorship of Chao Long-Mong-Chang. He gave Kassei or Manipur to Haw Yot, and three districts of the Khang-sei or Naga country to one Chao ho-tom. To his only son, Sao Hun-Hpa, he assigned the Yaw country west of the Kyendwen. In the State of Mogaung itself it was not his son but his Minister Sao Sui-Hpa who succeeded to the throne in A.D. 1520. Sao Sui-Hpa was known by his title Sam-Long-Paw-Mong (Sam-Lung-pawmaing) and, as indicated by Ney Elias, was not of the Mao line of Sawbwas. He ruled for six years and was succeeded in A.D. 1526 by one Chao Sui-Kwei, surnamed Chao Peng, whose relationship to his immediate predecessor or earlier Sawbwas of Mogaung is not known from the Chronicles. In the thirteenth year of this prince's reign (Shan Lakli-Rungmao 23 = A.D. 1556) a Burmese army despatched by the king of Hantha-Wadi (Skt. Hamsavati), by which name Pegu (Shan Pai-Ko) was known, invaded Mogaung and conquered it. These Burmese conquerors also established priests and teachers in Mogaung to convert the rulers and the local population to Buddhism.³³⁰ The Sawbwa Chao-Peng offered his submission and was allowed to continue as a tributary chief. Mao glory had departed. For an appraisal of how the Shan power in Burma ultimately succumbed to the Burmese assaults it is necessary to know the fresh rise and expansion of Burmese power in their new centre

330 Ibid., p. 42.

in the south. The fall of Pagan and consequent Shan predominance in Upper Burma led numerous Burmese families to quit their country in the Irrawaddy valley and trek across to the valley of the Sittang. Far to the south-east of Pagan and around Toungoo (or Taungu or Taung-ngu) on the bank of the Sittang, a place safer and happier than any in the Irrawaddy valley, a Burmese settlement began to grow up which owed nominal allegiance to Pagan. In A.D. 1280 a village of these settlers had to be fortified on a hill spur (taung-ngu) as an outpost against slave hunting by the Karens who had their States nearby to the east. Constant flow of Burmese population to this area from the Irrawaddy valley made Toungoo so strong that its chief Thinkkaba (1347-58) asserted the independence of Toungoo and proclaimed himself king and built a palace in traditional style. This small monarchy was destined to develop into a mighty power in course of time. In 1358 Thinkkaba was succeeded by his son Pyanchi. During his reign a fresh wave of Burmese immigrants entered his kingdom from Sagaing and Pin-Ya in the Irrawaddy basin which had been destroyed by the Mao-Shans in 1364. In an inscription erected by him at Pagan he recorded his visit to that place to make offerings to the temples there and also stated how he and his wife had welcomed refugees from the Shan terror.

Though the Burmese political aspirations found expression in this little State of Toungoo, yet in the first one hundred and thirty-nine years of its existence it had no stability. No single ruling family in this early period was able

to hold its power for long. The second ruler Pyanchi (1358-77), who was on friendly terms with the neighbouring Mon State of Pegu, fell a victim to the machination of the ambitious Ava king, Mingyi Swaswake, who was anxious 'to revive the traditional Burmese policy of subduing the Mons of the south', but had been restrained from doing so in the early part of his reign by the aggressive activities of the Mao-Shans. But at a desperate moment in A.D. 1383 he secured Chinese support against the raiding Mao-Shans, which relieved him of the northern pressure. In Pegu, on Razadarit's accession in A.D. 1385, his uncle made a plot to seize power by dethroning him and appealed to Mingyi Swaswake for support offering to rule as his vassal. This opportunity, as noticed already, Mingyi Swaswake wanted to exploit to fulfil his ambition and a long-drawn war ensued between Ava and Pegu with no tangible gain for the former. In this struggle the Toungoo rulers did not always observe neutrality. At times they fought on the side of Ava against the Mons. Attempts were also made from time to time by both Ava and Pegu to wipe off the independence of Toungoo.

This state of things in Toungoo was brought under control by the first important ruler, named Minkyinyo, who came to the throne in A.D. 1486. He was the real founder of the Toungoo dynasty. His accession synchronised with the bad days of Ava. Narapati's son Thihathura (1469-81) was the last of the Ava kings in whose reign there was comparatively more peace. The peace that Ava had from the time of surrendering Sao Ngan-Hpa to the Chinese was due to Narapati's formal acceptance of

Chinese overlordship which guaranteed security to Ava against the rebels and Shans and invested Narapati with a gold seal of appointment as 'Comforter of Ava'. Earlier China was glad to make common cause with Ava at the request of Mingyi Swaswaka against the Mao-Shans whose growing power became a matter of concern for both. The Shans quarrelled among themselves, but also formed powerful confederacies and alliances against external enemies, particularly the Chinese and the Burmese. The Chinese failed to break the process of Shan consolidation and had to be contented with warning the Sawbwa of Mohnyin against obstructing the route between Burma and Yun-nan. The Ming dynasty reached the apex of its power under Yung Lo³³¹ (1403-1424). Yung Lo was aggressive in his foreign policy and received tributes from most of the South-east Asian countries including Java and Ceylon. Under him, the petty chiefs of Upper Burma acquiesced more or less in Chinese authority.³³² These were mostly Shan chiefs. But by the middle of the fifteenth century there was a marked decline of the Ming power and most of the countries asserted their independence and stopped the tributes. Friction with the Japanese further weakened the Ming in the first half of the sixteenth century. Thus when the Chinese control weakened Upper Burma and the neighbouring regions to the north and east became, as Harvey puts it, 'a bedlam of snarling Shan States'. The Shans

³³¹ Chu-Ti was more correctly called by his dynastic title Cheng Tsu. He is best known to us by the name of his reign period, Yung Lo.

³³² Latourette : op.cit., p.287.

became strong and aggressive again after Thihathira's death in A.D. 1481.

Temporary Recovery of Mao-Shan Power : Capture of Ava :

His two successors Minhkaung (1481-1502) and Shwenankyawshin (1502-27) were unable to stem the tide of mounting disorders. Mohayin would not forget the past. When the restraining hands of China were found weak or withdrawn, it made a series of attacks on Ava, which, in A.D. 1527, culminated in the capture and sack of the city and the death of Shwenankyawshin. The Sawbwa of Mohayin then put his son Thohanbwa (Hso-Han-Hpa) as the ruler of Ava. This Mohayin Prince was a 'full-blooded savage', says Harvey. He had no respect for the Buddhist religion. It seems he had no faith in the integrity of the Burmese Buddhist monks. He wanted to suppress them on the ground that they conspired against the Shan Government and fomented rebellions to overthrow it. He, therefore, 'pillaged pagodas, massacred monks, and made bonfire of the precious contents of monastic libraries'.³³³

³³³ Hall : A History of South-east Asia, p.140.

Hallett notes the point of view of a then Shan Sawbwa of Burma, who, he says 'certainly seems to have considered the safety of his dynasty more than religion ; but the poongyees, or monks, in those days may have been as dangerous in conducting rebellions as those in Thibet have frequently proved.' Hallett also quotes in this connection (See next page)

Thohanbwa was succeeded by several other Shan Sawbwas,³³⁴ who ruled Ava until in A.D. 1555 it was conquered by Bayin Naung (1551-81), the greatest of the Toungoo rulers, and incorporated into the reunited kingdom of Burma under him.

The Rise of the Toungoo Dynasty : Its Political Expansion :

King Minkyino of Toungoo took advantage of the weaknesses and disorders in the kingdom of Ava that followed the death of Thihathura to extend his territories northwards. His greatest territorial gain was the acquisition of the Kyaukse area. When Ava was sacked by the Mohnyin Shans many Burmese

(Continued from the previous foot-note)
the following from the Royal History ; "He (apparently referring to the Shan ruler of Ava, Thohanbwa) was of a cruel and savage disposition. He spared not men's lives. He respected not the three treasures (Buddha, the law, and the assembly). Pagodas, he used to say, are not the Bhoora (Paya), but merely fictitious vaults in which the Burmese deposit gold, silver, and jewels ; so he dug into and rifled those shrines of their treasures. The poongyees too, he used to say, having no wives and children, under pretence of gathering disciples, collect guards around them ready to rise in rebellion. He therefore built a number of sheds on the plain of Toung-ba-loo, and pretending to do honour to the poongyees, invited all those around Ava, Tsagaing, and Panya to a feast. Then surrounding them with an army, he had them all slaughtered. He then seized all the books in their monasteries and had them burned. But some of the Shans had pity on the poongyees, and many thus escaped to Prome and Toungoo. More than three hundred and sixty were killed, but more than a thousand escaped". - Hallett's Historical Sketch of the Shans, op.cit., pp.336-37.

³³⁴ Hkonmaing, usurper (1543-46) ; Mobyé Narapati (1546-52), son of Hkonmaing ; Sitimkyawhatin, usurper (1552-55).
- See Hall : A History of South-east Asia. Appendix, p.732.

chiefs fled from there to take service under him which simply added to his strength. At that time the northern Shan States were so divided among themselves that a threat to the Sittang valley from that quarter was no near possibility. This gave Minkyinyo an opportunity to prepare for the conquest of the rich Mon kingdom of Pegu in the south, but, before the preparations could be completed, he died in A.D. 1531. The Mon country of Thaton and Pegu, which Anawrahta of Pagan had conquered in the middle of the eleventh century, regained independence during the Mongol invasions of Pagan, when, by a concerted action, Wareru and Tarabya expelled the Burmese in A.D. 1287 from Pegu and the country as far as Tavoy south of Prome and Toungoo.

Tabin Shwe T'i (1531-50), the son and successor of Minkyinyo, was a brilliant and enterprising ruler. At the time of his accession Burma was divided into four kingdoms, namely ; (1) the remnants of the original kingdom, with capital at Ava ; (2) Prome ; (3) Pegu ; and (4) Toungoo.³³⁵ The kingdom of Ava was then ruled by the Shan Sawbwa Thohanbwa (1527-43), a scion of the Mohnyin Shan dynasty. The countries to the north, north-west and east of Ava belonged to the Shans, who had their own principalities in them. Tabin Shwe T'i first annexed the Irrawaddy delta in A.D. 1535 with the towns of Bassein and Myaungmya, and then proceeded to conquer Pegu, then under an equally

335 Wood : A History of Siam. (Bangkok, 1933, Revised Edition), p.102.

brilliant ruler Takayupti. Pegu was so well defended that Tabin Shwe T'i's four years of campaigning could not bring about its fall. It was finally taken by him by stratagem in A.D. 1539 and King Takayupti fled to Prome closely followed by the Burmese king and his brother-in-law Bayin Naung. When Tabin Shwe T'i attacked Prome the Shan Sawbwa of Ava, Thohanbwa, sent against him a force downstream by a large flotilla which, by a powerful counter-attack, defeated the Burmese and relieved the city and the Burmese force had to retire. Failing to take Prome Tabin Shwe T'i decided to attack Martaban. He therefore reinforced his army with Mon levies and Portuguese mercenaries. These mercenaries were armed with muskets and light artillery and commanded by Joao Ceyero. With this mixed force he, in A.D. 1541, marched against the port-city of Martaban and attacked it. The city was defended by a Portuguese garrison. Tabin Shwe T'i had a tough job to break through the stout resistance put up by the city's forces, but the Portuguese soldiers later deserted the post and the defence collapsed. Tabin Shwe T'i then took the city by storm and gave it over to horrible massacre and plunder by his mercenaries which continued for three days. This frightful act of savagery had such demoralising effect on the rest of the Mon country that the Burmese king received the surrender of Moulmein on the opposite bank without having to strike a blow and the remainder of the Mon country 'as far as the Siamese frontier at Tavoy fell into Burmese hands'.³³⁶ He celebrated his victory by adding commemorative spires to the principal Mon

³³⁶ Hall : Burma, p.39.

pagodas of that country. The famous Shwe Dagon Pagoda³³⁷ received a special thank-offering of ten viss (36.5lb) of pure gold.

In the course of his campaign against Pegu Tabin Shwe T'i occupied a town called Chieng-Krai or Chieng-Kran, now called Gyaing or Kya-in on the bank of the Ataram river in the Moulmein district. This town was then subject to Siam. King P'rajai of Siam, heading a strong force, attacked and utterly defeated the Burmese and drove them out of his dominions.³³⁸ Here, too, the Portuguese mercenaries in the service of Siam played such a notable part in turning out the Burmese that they were rewarded with various commercial and residential privileges. This Chieng-Krai incident became the original cause of a long and bitter struggle between Siam and Burma later bringing death, famine and unspeakable misery to both countries'.³³⁹

The conquest of the Mon country encouraged Tabin Shwe T'i to renew his invasion of Prome in the following year (1542). In the meantime, the Mon king Takayuppi had died and many of the Mon chiefs offered their allegiance to the Burmese king, who, they thought, would be able to guarantee peace and a settled Government after long years of chaos, bloodshed and miseries from which their country had suffered. On the other

³³⁷ The Burmese legend is that two brothers, Tapusa and Palikat, received from Gautama eight hairs of his head, which they brought by sea to Suvannabhumi and enshrined under the Shwe Dagon Pagoda, which stands just outside the small fishing village of Dagon, named after it, and renamed Rangoon by Alaungpaya (1755).

³³⁸ Wood : op.cit., p.102.

³³⁹ Ibid., p.103.

hand, the Burmese king, too, treated the Mons as equals with the Burmese and respected the Mon customs and institutions. It is believed that behind such conciliatory policy Tabin Shwe T'i had a larger plan of conquest in the east with the support of the Mons, otherwise it is in sharp contrast to the scenes of massacre and plunder which he had enacted at Martaban.

Reaching Prome with his army he laid siege to the city and, by causing an exhaustion of its food stocks, compelled it to submit after five months. As a punishment here, too, he allowed the population to be slaughtered and their properties robbed by his soldiers. By the capture of Prome he got an outlet to the Irrawaddy waterway to move his troops to attack the Shan country of the north. When this danger presented itself at the door of the quarrelling Shan States, they sank their differences and prepared themselves for a concerted action to recover Prome from the Burmese occupation for their own security. In A.D. 1544 the king of Ava, Hkonmaing and the Sawbwas of Mohmyin, Momeik (Mong-Mit), Hsen-Wi, Bhamo, Yawnghwe and Mone united and organized a combined force to drive off the Burmese from Prome by a counter attack. The force moved down the Irrawaddy in a flotilla of war-boats and launched its counter-attack on the Burmese. The Shans were also joined in this expedition by the Arakanese. But, with the help of his Portuguese gunners Tabin Shwe T'i won a decisive victory over the Shans and forced them to retreat. He then advanced northwards and occupied the country up to the north of Minbu and Myingyan districts, but did not proceed far enough to attack Ava. He had enough territories

in southern and central Burma which he wanted to consolidate and become strong before exhausting himself in a war with the Shans.

He also wanted to see himself acknowledged as a true Burman king. He was therefore duly crowned king of Burma with ancient ceremonial at the old, though ruined, capital of Pagan. After that he returned to the south and reached Pegu, which city he made his capital instead of Pagan or Toungoo. At Pegu he held a second coronation in A.D. 1546 using both Burmese and Mon rites. His ambition rose high, for he wanted to become a great Emperor ('Chakravarty Raja') and earn the distinction of being the possessor of white elephants. The king of Siam, he learnt, possessed a number of such elephants and he was determined to have them. He also remembered that Siam was no friend of the Burmese as the latter had already a clash with that country at Chieng-Kran.

Arakan Expedition :

Soon after his coronation at Pegu an Arakanese prince appeared at his Court for help to remove the ruling chief of his country, named Minbin (1531-53), and secure the throne for him. This prince offered to rule as a Burmese vassal if the help was given. Tabin Shwe T'i was simply too glad to give the help and have that country as a part of his dominions. But the fortifications of the capital city Mrohaung were so strong that his expedition failed to break through them. He therefore called off the expedition on the plea that the Siamese were

raiding the Tavoy region and the military needs in that area were more urgent. His Arakan expedition was just an opportunist venture. His main objective had been Ayuthia and for its conquest he made massive preparations. He also knew that Siam was weakened by domestic troubles. From A.D. 1534 to 1549 the Siamese Court was in a state of turmoil with scandalous stories, intrigues, conspiracies and murders.

First Burmese Invasion of Ayuthia : An Unsuccessful Adventure :

In A.D. 1534 king Phra Jai Rajat'irat (Jaya Rajadhiraj), a half-brother of King Boromaraja IV (Parama Raja), occupied the throne of Ayuthia by killing off a boy king of five years and five months. According to a Siamese Chronicle³⁴⁰ he twice invaded Chiengmai during A.D. 1525-26 without success and died in A.D. 1527 while returning to his capital after the second invasion. Thus the dates of the Chronicle do not agree with those given by Wood. On the death of King Phra Jai Rajat'irat, the ministers, nobles and royal Brahmin astrologers raised his elder son Phra Keo Fah, then only eleven years old, with the title of Phra Yotfah and appointed the Queen Mother, Sri Sudachan as Regent to assist the young King. In the usual course, the deceased King's younger half-brother, Prince T'ien Raja, would have been appointed Regent. But the choice of a

³⁴⁰ See the Siamese Chronicle Phra Raj P'ongsawaden Chabab Phra Raj Hat'alek'a (or the "Royal Autograph Edition" as called by Wood) as translated by Phra Phraison Salarak (U Aung Thein) under the title "Intercourse between Siam and Burma" in JBRBS, XXV, II, 1935, p.59.

female for this position was exceptional. This lady, who was one of the senior non-Royal Consorts of King Phrajai (1534-46), must have obtained the nomination to regency from the King during his life time. But her scandalous character, as soon as proved, led to a bloody revolution in the capital, which also brought invasions from outside. While acting as Queen Regent she carried on illicit love affairs with a palace attendant, named P'an But Srit'ep (Putra Sridev), whom, in course of time, she promoted to the title of K'un Worawongsat'irat (Varavamsadhiraja) and then raised to the throne. She cleared the throne for him by executing the boy king, though she spared his younger brother Phra Sri Sin who was then seven years old.³⁴¹ She also caused those nobles of her Court to be murdered who could not approve of her conduct. There were also certain disturbances at this time in the northern Provinces of the kingdom.

All these serious internal troubles produced such instability of the Siamese Government that Tabin Shwe T'i saw in it a good opportunity to strike and annex that country to his dominions and be the master of the white elephants. He therefore marched on Ayut'ia with an army of 30,000 foot-soldiers, 2000 cavalry and 300 elephants. He was joined in the expedition by the king of Prome and the Governor of Bassein. The army followed the route through the frontier outpost of Three Pagodas.

³⁴¹ Ibid., p. 60.

Entering the Siamese territory Tabin Shwe T'i attacked and captured Kanchanaburi (Kanburi) and learnt from the local officers that Somdet Phra Maha Chakrap'at Rajat'irat (Maha Chakrabarty Rajadhiraj) had ascended the throne of Siam and that there was peace and order throughout the kingdom under him. At this news, he hesitated to proceed further, but as he had already advanced so far, he decided to move forward. He next attacked and took Muang Sup'anburi and then reached Lump'li in A.D. 1530, a date earlier by several years, and then marched to the vicinity of Ayuthia. The Siamese King became ready to meet him. But the Burmese King, finding the fortifications of the city too strong, preferred to retire. The Chronicle says that he 'remained in camp for three days and having seen the walls of the city and the royal palaces inside it, he broke camp, and returned by the same route by which he had come'.³⁴² This invasion is not mentioned in the Hmannan history. Harvey and Wood also make no reference to it in their works. H.R.H. Prince Damrong in his Our Wars with the Burmese, Ayut'ia Period, gives two invasions of Siam by Tabin Shwe T'i, but his account of the first invasion says that it took place during the reign of King Phra Jai Rajat'irat in Cula Sakkaraj 900 (A.D. 1538), when the two monarchs met at Chieng Kran, a place identified by H.R.H. Prince Damrong himself as 'the modern Gyaing in the Amherst district'. As already said, Chieng Kran

³⁴² Ibid., pp. 67-68.

belonged to Siam, but when the Burmese King made aggression upon it the Siamese King recovered it by defeating the Burmese. It was only an incident of encroachment when Tabin Shwe T'i was engaged in the conquest of the kingdom of Pegu.

Early in the year 1549 Tabin Shwe T'i made a grand preparation for a second invasion of Ayuthia and then marched for attack with a huge army of 300,000 men, 3,000 horses and 700 elephants. He proceeded with the king of Prome, who was his grandson, and the Governors of Bassein, Toungoo and other provinces by way of Martaban, Kanburi and Sur'an and by June encamped himself in the neighbourhood of Ayuthia. In the meantime, some six months earlier the usurper K'un Worawongsa and his wife, the notorious Queen Regent, had been beheaded by the nobles, and Prince T'ien, the younger half-brother of King P'rajai, was crowned King with the title of Somdet Phra Maha Chakrap'at Rajat'irat or Maha Chakrabarty Rajadhiraj (1549-69). During his twenty years of reign there was much improvement in the internal political situation and the country enjoyed comparative peace and was better organized for defence.

Tabin Shwe T'i³⁴³ laid siege to the capital, which, according to Pinto, lasted for nearly four months. The Burmese repeatedly delivered fierce assaults on the capital, but were repulsed every time. It is of historic significance that in this war the Siamese Queen Suriyot'ai and one of her daughters fought

³⁴³ who is usually referred to in the Chronicle as the King of Hanthawaddy (Hamsavati ; Pegu).

valiantly wearing men's dress side by side with the men against the Burmese and laid down their lives leaving behind immortal fame for both heroism and patriotism.³⁴⁴ Having failed to break through the defences of Ayuthia the Burmese had to retire as their provisions had run short and the army was so badly equipped that it suffered untold distress and privations. Further reasons for the retreat of the Burmese army were that Phra Maha T'amma-
 raja (Mahadharmaraja), the vassal king of P'itsanulok, who was also the son-in-law of the Siamese King, was about to descend and attack it with a large force³⁴⁵ and also that there were reports of disorder in the Burmese kingdom itself. Hence His Burman Majesty, first to avoid the routes vulnerable to Siamese attacks during retreat and secondly, to seize the food stocks collected for Maha T'annmaraja's army, decided to proceed northwards along the bank of the river Menam and fight the northern army at Chainat where it was encamped. As the Burmese left in that direction King Chakrap'at's two sons, Phra Ramesuan and Phra Mahint'rat proceeded to attack them in the rear which was guarded by Bayin Naung, called Maha Uparaja, in the Siamese Chronicle. Maha T'annmaraja failed to resist the numerically

344 The description in the Chronicle is that, in going to rescue her husband from a bad position in the fighting, Queen Suriot'ai was thrown off her balance and her head and body fell back supine when the elephant, she mounted, was pierced with the tusks through the throat by that of the king of Prome. In this situation the king of Prome cut her with his long-handled sword, and the blow was delivered with such force that the weapon cut through the shoulder and reached the breast. According to Wood the Queen and her daughter were both pierced through by Burmese spears (which may have followed the sword stroke).

345 Maha T'annmaraja mobilised a force of 50,000 men from the five northern Muangs, namely, P'itsanulok, Sawank'alok, Sukhot'ai, P'ichai and P'ichit.

superior Burmese army and both Phra Ramesuan and Phra Mahint'rat were captured by Bayin Naung by an adroit manoeuvre of the rearguard. Later they were released on request by the Siamese King, who gave in exchange two white elephants as desired by the Burmese King. These elephants, however, had to be soon returned being uncontrollable. The Burmese returned to Pegu by way of Kamp'engp'et and Melamao.³⁴⁶ Tabin Shwe T'i, after his retreat from Siam, fell under the influence of a Portuguese, named Diego Suarez and became a confirmed drunkard and debauchee. While yet a youngman of thirty-six only his evil association and vices caused such a breakdown of his morals that he became absolutely unfit to govern the country and left the conduct of affairs to others. He was assassinated in A.D. 1550.³⁴⁷

After the death of Tabin Shwe T'i Burma was thrown into confusion. Bayin Naung,³⁴⁸ the brother-in-law of Tabin Shwe T'i, was the next aspirant to the throne. But the Burmese chiefs of Toungoo and Prème refused to recognise his claim. One Smim Sawhtut, said to be a Mon prince who procured the murder of Tabin Shwe T'i, became a patriot and liberator in the eyes of the Mon people. He was at once accepted by the Peguans as their ruler. Another Mon leader became strong at Martaban. Thus Burma was once again split up into a number of independent States. At the same time another prince of the old line, Smim Htaw, became

³⁴⁶ "Intercourse between Siam and Burma" : JBRB, XXV, II, 1935, pp. 73-82 ; Wood : op.cit., p. 113.

³⁴⁷ Wood : op.cit., p. 116 ; Hall : A History of South-east Asia, p. 212.

³⁴⁸ also called Bhureng Nong.

the leader of a Mon rebellion against the Burmese rule. He marched on Pegu and eliminated his rival Smim Sawhtut in A.D. 1551.

In face of this disintegration of the dominions of Tabin Shwe T'i, Bayin Naung seized Toungoo and proclaimed himself king. His immediate task was to recapture the Mon country from Smim Htaw. In A.D. 1551 he marched on Pegu with a mixed army of Burmese, Mon and Portuguese mercenaries and fought a battle outside the walls of the capital. Smim Htaw was defeated and the Mon resistance collapsed. Smim Htaw fled to Martaban, where he was later searched out and killed. But his memory is venerated by the local people as a great patriot. He was the thirty-seventh ruler of Wareru's line. After the victory Bayin Naung was crowned at Pegu 'with the grandest ceremonial'. He also built there a magnificent capital city where he established his Court and built his palace.

Burmese Conquest of Shan States :

Bayin Naung was one of the foremost leaders of the Burmese and, as Harvey puts it, "the greatest explosion of human energy ever seen in Burma". Four years after the re-establishment of his rule in Pegu he directed his attention to the north with the determination to conquer the Shan country. With that object in A.D. 1553 he sent up the Irrawaddy an army of observation. The Shan chiefs took it to be a definite precursor of an invasion of their States by the ambitious and powerful Burmese King. This caused them to give up their mutual quarrels and spirit of hostility and unite to meet the common danger.

Bayin Naung was conscious of the strength of Shan resistance that he would meet with. He, therefore, raised the largest force he could muster for the purpose and decided first to subjugate Ava before invading the Shan States. With that object, late in A.D. 1554, he launched simultaneously a two-pronged attack on Ava from the bases of Toungoo and Pagan. The city fell in March, 1555 and opened up the way for a drive farther north. He next annexed Bangyi in Monywa district and Myedu in Shwebo district, both under Ava.

In April, 1556 he invaded the Shan States of Hsi-Paw³⁴⁹ and Ungbaung (Shan : Ong Pawng),³⁵⁰ both being Sawbwaships of Mong-Mit (Moniet), the parent State. These Shan States were conquered and Mong-Mit became feudatory to Burma. The State of Mong-Mit, previous to its conquest by the Burmese, exercised sway over the following eight minor Sawbwaships, namely, (1) Bamo ; (2) Molai (to the south-east of Bhamo); (3) Ungbaung ; (4) Maing-lung (Mong-Long) ; (5) Thongzei ; (6) Hsi-Paw (Thibo) ; (7) Tagaung ; and (8) Singu. He next attacked Mong-Nai (Monei) and subdued it. The States claimed by Mong-Nai as its dependencies were : (1) Nyaung-Yuei ; (2) Mobyai ; (3) Yauk Sauk ; (4) Legya ; (5) Tigyit ; (6) Kyaing-Taung ; (7) Maing-Seik, and sometimes the Mre-Lap Shans.³⁵¹

³⁴⁹ Burmese Thibo, Shan Tai-Po and Pali Thiri-Rata (Sri Rastra). It was founded by a local chief named Udina in 423 B.C. and in the thirteenth century captured by the Mao-Shans. The city of Hsi-Paw consisted of three forts or walled compounds joined together. - See N. Elias : op.cit., p.55.

³⁵⁰ Some two miles to the westward of Thibo and an oblong city on the Nam-po 600 ta by 300, containing three gates on each face, or twelve in all.

³⁵¹ N. Elias : op.cit., pp.54-56 ; Hall : A History

Conquest of Chieng-mai (Lan-Na-T'ai) :

Temporary Subjugation of Ayuthia :

He then pushed on towards Chieng-mai³⁵² to conquer that kingdom, then under Maharaja Mekut'i, a Prince of Mong-Nai. Bayin Naung found an excuse to attack Chieng-mai and it was that its ruler Mekut'i had been helping the Shans of Burma against him. He, with his huge army, besieged Chieng-mai and took it in April, 1556 without having to face any serious resistance. Mekut'i was reduced to submission and compelled to acknowledge the Burman Majesty as his suzerain and to agree to pay an annual tribute of elephants, horses, silk and other products of his kingdom. Thus the independent Tai kingdom of Chieng-mai or Lan-Na-T'ai, established in A.D. 1296 by king Mengrai, once master of almost the whole of North Siam, fell never to rise again. Further, between A.D. 1563 and 1570 Bayin Naung twice invaded and seized Ayuthia and made its rulers surrender. He also twice attacked the Laos kingdom. With the seizure of Ayuthia Siam had to remain under Burma for an interval of fifteen years.

Mong-Mao Reduced to Vassalage :

In his general plan of conquest of the Shan States Bayin Naung did not spare Mong-Mao, which was then a prosperous

³⁵² Burmese Zimme.

country. But showing a cause of Burmese invasion of Mong-Mao the Burmese chroniclers "pretend", as pointed out by Ney Elias, "that shortly before 1560 the Maos had seized some villages within the borders of Mong-Mit, and that the Sawbwa of the latter place had appealed to the Burmese for aid, but as Mong-Mit had upto within a year or two of this time been a part of the dominion of the Mao Kings, and the Burmese had been steadily advancing in their conquest of the Shan States from south to north, it is scarcely necessary to look for any special cause for quarrel".³⁵³

It appears that Bayin Naung, with Chieng-mai as his ultimate objective, did not go so far north as to invade Mong-Mao. The actual invasion of Mong-Mao took place, according to the Burmese Chronicles, in the year 924 B.E. or A.D. 1562, and hence during the interval between the conquest of Chieng-mai and the invasion of Ayuthia in A.D. 1564 by the Burmese king, Sao Hom-Hpa³⁵⁴ was then the king (1516-1604) of Mong-Mao. Bayin Naung, the Burmese king of Pegu, is reported to have sent an army to Mong-Mao, numbering two hundred thousand men, under the command of his son, Nanda Bayin,³⁵⁵ who was heir-apparent to the throne, and three of his younger brothers, rulers respectively of Prome, Toungoo, and Ava.³⁵⁶ They attacked the

³⁵³ N. Elias : op.cit., pp.24.

³⁵⁴ He was the 44th Sawbwa of the Mong-Mao line of Mao-Shan rulers and is to be distinguished from Sao Hom-Hpa, the 41st Sawbwa.

³⁵⁵ also called Nanda Bhureng.

³⁵⁶ N. Elias : op.cit., p.24.

Mong-Mao territories from the north, burning and destroying the Sawbuships of Santa, Mong-La and other neighbouring towns in the valley of the Nam-Tapeng, and then moved south entering the Nam-Mao (Shweli) valley and attacking the capital, where, after little or no fighting, reduced to submission the ruling Sawbwa, Sao Hom-Hpa, and made him accept the status of a vassal chief under the Burman Majesty. Sao Hom-Hpa had also to send the Burmese King a princess in token of homage. 357.

Bayin Naung's reign (1551-81) was crowded with wars and expeditions. After a long struggle with the Shans since the fall of Pagan in A.D. 1287 for supremacy over Burma, the Burmese, from their new centres in Lower Burma, succeeded gradually in pressing northwards and, under the leadership of Bayin Naung, firmly establishing their suzerainty over the Shan States of Upper Burma. There was henceforward no recovery of Shan power over Upper Burma or any part of it. In Lower Burma, though Bayin Naung relentlessly crushed all Mon opposition for establishing his authority, yet, on the whole, like his predecessor, he treated them with respect. His commander-in-chief, Binnya Dala, and a number of other principal officers of State were Mon.

Bayin Naung was a devoted disciple of Pali Buddhism. He built pagodas in many places, distributed Buddhist scriptures and promoted the study of Dhammathats. Though he was a

great killer of human beings, yet his conscience revolted against animal sacrifices. He even prohibited such practices as the killing of goats by the Muhammadans in celebration of Bakr Id, offering of white animals to the Mahagiri spirit on Mount Popa in Myingyan district and the burial of slaves, elephants and horses at the death of ^a/Shan Sawbwa along with his body. He sent offerings from time to time to the famous Tooth of the Buddha at Kandy in Ceylon and also lights and brooms made of hair of his own head and that of his chief queen to be used there. He wished to be connected matrimonially with the house of Ceylon with the result that he received a princess and a tooth, claimed as genuine, from Raja Dhammapala of Colombo. The tooth was enshrined in a jewelled casket beneath the Mahazedi Pagoda, which he had founded at Pegu. After the conquest of Mong-Mao Nanda Bayin did not destroy the city, but, on the other hand, 'teachers of Buddhism were left there to instruct the Shan-priests in the worship of Gaudama and to convert the rulers and people'.³⁵⁸

In A.D. 1581 Nanda Bayin succeeded to the throne of Pegu only to see the whole empire from Ava to Moulmein bristling with rebellions. "Bayin Naung had sown the wind", as Hall aptly remarks, "his son reaped the whirlwind". But for the time he quelled all rebellions with a stern hand. The most powerful revolt was led by his brother-in-law, Thadominsaw, ruler (Governor) of Ava. It arose from a private family affair.

³⁵⁸ Ibid. ; Hall : A History of South-east Asia, p.216.

The Burmese Crown Prince Min Chit Swa,³⁵⁹ married a daughter of this Prince of Ava, but very much maltreated her. The latter complained to her father of the maltreatment. The Prince of Ava was upset at the report and determined to revolt against Nanda Bayin and wrote to the Governors of Prome and Toungoo seeking their joint action aiming at independence.³⁶⁰ When this was made known to Nanda Bayin he proceeded to attack Ava in A.D. 1584 leaving the Crown Prince as Regent at Pegu (Hanthawadi). He fought a duel with the Prince of Ava on elephants and defeated him and suppressed the revolt ruthlessly. He also ordered mass execution of those of his Court nobles and their families who were found to be in collusion with Ava. A Venetian jeweller, named Gasparo Balbi, who was an eye witness of the ghastly execution, gives a vivid description of it, an English translation of which was published by Richard Hakluyt in his Principall Voyages.

While Nanda Bayin was busy trying to put his father's empire in order, Siam found in P'ra Naret a very brilliant young Crown Prince, called also "Black Prince", who played a glorious role in liberating Siam from the Burmese yoke. It was he who declared Siam independent and hit back with devastating effect the Burmese attempts to subdue that country.

³⁵⁹ Wood : op.cit., p.142.

³⁶⁰ Wood, Ibid. p.131 ; Hall : A History of South-east Asia, p.219. According to Hall the Prince of Ava, Thadominsaw, was Bayin Naung's brother and hence Nanda Bayin's uncle, but Wood mentions that he was Bayin Naung's brother-in-law. Ney Elias's statement is that the rulers of Prome, Toungoo and Ava were respectively the younger brothers of the king of Pegu (Bayin Naung). - See op.cit., p.24. From the matrimonial relations between the two families Wood appears to be correct.

He was the elder son of king Maha T'ammaraaja and had to spend a part of his early life as a hostage in Burma. As a king he was given the title of Naresuen the Great, which he eminently deserved. This part of the Siamese history is described elsewhere.

With the death of Bayin Naung in A.D. 1581 and outbreak of rebellions in his empire, the Burmese control over the northern Shan States ceased to become real and from the extant accounts it appears that the northernmost kingdom of Mong-Mao became virtually free. The Shan land was like a buffer State between China and Burma and hence had to bear the brunt of both Chinese and Burmese pressure. The Shans, too, were a vigorous race but, being divided into many small principalities, had to form confederations from time to time to organize resistance against the powerful Chinese in the north and east and Burmese in the south. Yet for over two centuries and a half after the destruction of Pagan in A.D. 1287 the Shans held a predominant position in Burma except the Sittang valley about Toungoo, Arakan and, for a period, Ava. The Shans were in friendship with the Mongol rulers of China and collaborated with the latter in destroying and driving off the Burmese rule at Pagan. But when the Mongols declined the Shans asserted their independence and threw off their allegiance to China. With the coming of the Ming the old alignment changed and both the Chinese and the Burmese turned against the Shans who had to fight on two fronts maintaining their almost constant pressure on the Burmese until A.D. 1556 when Bayin Naung, for the first time, started subduing the Shan States.

But soon after the accession of Nanda Bayin and some twenty years after the first conquest of Mong-Mao in A.D. 1562 by the Burmese king Bayin Naung, that is, in A.D. 1582 (Shan date Mong Hsan 54 = B.E. 944 = A.D. 1582) and apparently during a time of peace between China and Burma, but with the latter's power of control over the northern Mao-Shan States gone, the Maos were again attacked by a Chinese army of three hundred thousand men, a figure which may well have been exaggerated. Three great battles were fought without any decisive result and the Chinese are said to have sued for peace, an indication of Chinese reverse at the last moment. The Mong-Mao king, Sao Hom-Hpa, accorded it and the Chinese army returned to Yun-nan. There is no mention of the Burmese in this war.

After this Sino-Shan peace settlement Mong-Mao remained undisturbed for the next twenty years. But in A.D. 1604 (Shan Kat Mao 16 or B.E. 966), when Sao Hom-Hpa became very old and had just made over the government of the country to his son Sao Poreng (or Sao Boreng), the then reigning Sawbwa of Hsen-Wi, a Chinese general named Wang-Sang-Su, with a large force, appeared on the borders of Mong-Mao. At this time Sao Hom-Hpa died, but the Chinese army commenced invasion of his country. The Shans could not put up any effective resistance and Sao Poreng fled to Mogaung with a party of Chinese pursuing him. At a place called Kat-Kyo-Wing-Maw on the left bank of the Nam-Kiu (the Irrawaddy) his followers mutinied, in consequence of which he, in despair, ended his life by drowning himself in the river. Since then Mong-Mao remained in the permanent occupation of the Chinese. At Mogaung

the last independent Sawbwa, Chao Hum-Hpa, died leaving no son to succeed him. The next Sawbwa chosen was then Sao Tit-Hpa,³⁶¹ the grandson and only remaining descendant of Sao Hom-Hpa.³⁶²

With Sao Poreng's death the Mao-Shan kingdom came to an end. About that time also the Burmese for the first time came to exercise authority over Hsen-Wi. The kings of Burma had been, of course, controlling successions to the Sawbwas in the Southern Shan States from a much earlier date and used to receive tribute from them.³⁶³ Thus the northern Shan country was divided between China and Burma. Since then the power and prosperity of the Tai principalities steadily declined. They were worn down not only by the aggression and rapacity of the Burmese and Chinese, and by the intestine wars, in which there is abundant proof that they always indulged, but by the advances of the Kachins.³⁶⁴ It may be noted that the pressure of the Chinese, Burmese and Kachins drove the Tai from much ^{of the} territory between China Proper and Burma, until Shan names of mountains, streams, and villages are the only remaining witnesses of former occupation. It is recorded in the Upper Burma Gazetteer that 'the once powerful States west of the Irrawaddy now only possess a meagre and much Burmanized population, while the border principalities to the east from Hsum Hsai to Yawng Hwe,

361 surnamed Chau-ka-maing.

362 N. Elias : op. cit., p. 25.

363 GUESS, I. I., pp. 280-81.

364 Ibid., p. 281.

and in a lesser degree even to Mong Nai, have suffered almost as much from the deliberate policy of the Burmese Kings and have only survived because they had the mass of their fellow-countrymen behind them'. The policy of Burmanization, followed by the Avan Kings, ruined the Shans politically and culturally. 'The sons or brothers of the ruling Sawbwas were always kept at the Avan Court, not only as hostages for the good behaviour of the Chief of the State, but that they might be reared under Burman influence and withdrawn from sympathy with those of their own race, so that when they in time came to rule, their loyalty to the suzerain might be ensured; moreover, the policy was to foster feuds between the different Sawbwas, and rival aspirants were left to settle their claims to the succession in a State by force of arms. The victorious claimant might be confirmed as Sawbwa by Royal patent, but he would not be, unless he was able to pay for it, and when the civil war was over, his forces were too exhausted to permit him to resist Burman demands'.³⁶⁵

Rev. Father Sangermano, who was at Ava and then at Rangoon from A.D. 1785 to 1807, says that from the time of Alaungpaya (1752-1760) all the Sawbwas were subjects and tributaries of the Burmese, but 'the cruel despotism, the continual vexations and oppressions of their masters have forced many of them to rebel; all of whom have leagued themselves with the Siamese'.³⁶⁶

³⁶⁵ Ibid.

³⁶⁶ Sangermano : The Burmese Empire. (John Murray) 1833, p.34.

The first Anglo-Burmese war ended with the Treaty of Yandabo, which was ratified on 24 February 1826. Under the Treaty His Majesty the King of Ava had to give up Arakan, Tenasserim, Assam and Manipur, together with the payment of an indemnity which was equivalent to one million sterling. Early in 1886 the whole of Upper Burma, including the Shan States, was declared to be a part of British India. As the eastern frontiers of the Shan States of Burma were not well-defined the British government had to carry on prolonged diplomatic negotiations with France and Siam before they could be finally settled. By Section 8 of the Upper Burma Laws Act, 1886, the local Government was empowered, with the sanction of the Governor General in Council, to define the Shan States from time to time. Before the passing of the Shan States Act, 1888, the only way in which enactments could be extended to the Shan States was by notification under the Upper Burma Laws Act. The Shan States Act came into force on the 1st. February 1889. By it the civil, criminal, and revenue administration of every Shan State is vested in the Chief of the State subject to the restrictions specified in the power granted to him. The Act respected the customary law of each State so far as it was in accordance with justice, equity and good conscience, not opposed to the spirit of the law in the rest of British India. On 17 October 1942, a treaty was signed by which the Republic of the Union of Burma was recognized by the British government as a fully independent State and on 4 January 1943 the republic's first president.

Sao Shwe Thaik, the Shan Swabwa of Yawnghwe, assumed charge from the military governor Sir Hubert Rance.

CHAPTER V

POLITICAL EXPANSION OF THE TAI IN THE MENAM
AND MEKONG VALLEYSEARLY KINGDOMS IN SIAM (Now THAILAND : Muang Thai) :

In the Menam-Mekong region of South-east Asia Siam (Thailand) is the home of the independent Tai or Thai peoples. It extends southwards into the Malay Peninsula and is bounded on the west and north by Burma and on the north-east and north by French Indo-China. It is about 1,200 miles long from north to south and about 500 miles from west to east at its greatest width comprising an area of 200,234 sq. miles with the Menam Chao P'ya flowing from the north to south, of which the chief tributaries are the Me Ping, the Me Yom, the Me Wang and the Me Sak. It is chiefly lowland with the valley of the Menam in the west and the valleys of the Mun and the Mekong in the east. North Siam is a combination of mountains, streams and forests, and the north-eastern part forms a large plateau about 800 feet high.

Setting aside the question of the pre-historic cave dwellers with flint tools and weapons, which are still dug up, we find that the earliest known aborigines of Siam belong to three races, the tall and fair complexioned Was or Lawas in the north and the dark curly-haired Negritos

and wavy-haired Indonesians in the south. The Semangs and Sakais of the forest of Malaya are said to be the remnants of the last two races. They wander about naked and squalid. Then there came in the early centuries of the Christian era the Mons, or Talaings as they are now called in Burma, from their main habitat in the region of Thaton and Prome (Ramanna-desa) and occupied Central Siam to the west of the Menam Chao P'ya called the country of Dvaravati. There spread westwards from the Mekong delta, Cambodia and the middle Mekong region another race of people, called Khmers, who occupied almost the whole of eastern Siam and, by the beginning of the eleventh century, established their sovereignty over the Mon country of Louvo and Dvaravati. Under the pressure of the advanced Mons and Khmers the Lawas mostly took refuge in the hills and the southern aborigines migrated to farther south.

The most powerful impact on the Mons and Khmers was that of the Tai. The Tai political pressure on Siam came from the north. The origins of this pressure are to be traced to certain events of historic importance in the earlier abodes of the race in the north. It may be remembered that the section of the Tai population of the ancient State of Lo that followed the Marquis of Lo to Shu (Sze-chuan) had to suffer terribly under the most rigorous conditions of forced labour imposed by Shih-Wang-Ti. Many perished under those conditions and those who survived ~~the oppressions~~ escaped to the wilds of Sze-chuan, Yun-nan and Kwei-chow. A great

bulk of them crossed the frontiers of the Chinese dominions and settled in southern Sze-chuan and western Yun-nan with their central seat in Ta-li Fu where they became known by their generic term Ngai-Lao. There were also Tai settlers of earlier times in that area who had been driven from the north by the Ch'in army in the first quarter of the third century B.C. They consolidated their power under their Chiefs and tried to expand. After a lapse of about two centuries and a half the Ngai-Lao came into clash with the Chinese who then rediscovered them in this southern region. The Ngai-Lao Chiefs, however, accepted the suzerainty of China and received Imperial Prefects appointed for their country.

But during General Chu-Ko-Liang's military campaigns in Yun-nan in A.D. 226 for quelling a rebellion against the authority of the Shu Han, a mass evacuation of people, predominantly Tai, took place and a great wave of these refugees from Sze-chuan, Yun-nan and Keiw-chow moved southwards down the valleys of the Mekong and Salween rivers. As a result, numerous Tai colonies began to spring up from the third century A.D. in the middle Mekong region and in the Salween valley of East Burma.

Those Tai people, who settled themselves in the middle Mekong region, built up a State called Hsip-Hsawng-Panna in the area of Keng-Hung¹ on the western bank of the Mekong river (Lan-Tsang-Kiang of the Chinese). In the ninth century A.D., if not earlier, this State comprised a part of southern territory of Yun-nan, a part of the eastern

¹ Also called Kiang. Vietnamese name is Chieng Tung.

Shan country of Burma, a part of the northwestern territory of the Laos kingdom and the northernmost part of Siam with Chieng-Sen, Chieng-Rai and Muang-Fang as its principal cities.² In the whole of this area the first city to become prominent historically was Chieng-Sen, a capital of a Tai State on the bank of the Mekong. Hallett points out that the Tai or Shans migrating southwards from Yun-nan took possession of the country which before their arrival had been occupied by the Yuns, or Karens, as they are called by the Burmese, who, on their part, had driven the Lewa, or Lawa, the aboriginal inhabitants, to the southward and into the hills. The Yuns occupied the country to the east of the Salween at the time of the arrival of the Shans. Kiang-Hung, he says, is still called Kiang Yun-gyee, or the large Yun town, by the Burmese. The Shans who inhabit the Yun country are called Yun Shans.

Though the earlier history of Chieng-Sen is shrouded in the mists of legends, yet from the ninth century onwards it played the main role in directing the course of early political development of the Tai colonists in the Upper Menam valley. Wood says that a list of kings, presumably Tai, belonging to the ancient Chieng-Sen dynasty, is available, but most of the early kings appear to be more mythological than historical. But one Prince P'roh (Skr. Brahma), said to be a scion of that dynasty, appears to be a historical

² Hoontrakul : op.cit., p.100.

figure from the accounts of his deeds. He was a Tai political adventurer of the ninth century A.D. He crossed the Mekong river and founded the first Tai colony at Chai Praka in the district of Chieng-Rai. Next he founded, to the west of Chieng-Rai, the city of Muang-Fang on the bank of the river Me Fang, a southern tributary of the Mekong, about A.D. 867.³ He then invaded the Cambodian Empire with a powerful drive down the Menam valley. He defeated the Cambodian forces, broke their defences and conquered their territories right down to Sawank'alok (Skr. Svargaloka) where he built a city called Jalieng or Chaliang.⁴ The great numbers of earlier Tai settlers, whom he found in the conquered territories, welcomed him on his victorious advance to the south. Prince ~~P'hrhm~~ P'hrhm's was probably the first major war of liberation of the Tai in the Upper Menam valley after Phra Ruang's temporary victory over the Cambodians at Sawank'alok in the seventh century A.D. and his proclamation as sovereign of Zimme. That this early Phra Ruang Dynasty was overthrown soon after his death by the 'king of Kiang Tsen' is significant and may well be connected with the Chieng-Sen rulers' design on this southern country with Tai subjects under Cambodia, which, in the ninth century,

³ According to some writers it was founded about or after A.D. 881. Reginald le May thinks that Brahma (P'hrhm) crossed the Mekong river about A.D. 860. - *Ibid*, p.156.

⁴ Wood : *op.cit*, p.50.

culminated in the conquests of Prince P'hrohm.

How long the Tai State formed by Prince P'hrohm in northern Siam continued to last is not known and there was a gap of about three centuries and a half without a regular history of the kingdom of Chieng-Sen. Dodds says that the kingdom of Chieng-Sen has a history as brilliant as that of Nan-Chao. But at one stage the Tai abandoned this capital at Chieng-Sen and founded a kingdom farther south-west, of which the capital was Phou Kam,⁵ a town situated on the Salween river. This new enterprise, however, proved to be ephemeral. Prince Damrong also made mention of an independent Tai State in the valley of the Salween river,⁶ but owing to the pressure of population, a number of them migrated farther westward and settled in Burma, while others went towards Tongking and Luang Phra Bang. The exact date of foundation of this State in the Salween valley remains unmentioned.

K'un Chom T'amma, a descendant of Prince P'rohm, founded the city of P'ayao in A.D. 1096 to the south of Chieng-Sen. This city became the capital of an independent Tai State in North Siam created at the cost of the Cambodian empire.

By the middle of the eleventh century some of the Tai communities penetrated Central Siam (Thailand), but they were minorities with no political significance. They formed

⁵ Dodd : op.cit., chap.XXI.

⁶ Reginald le May : op.cit., p.156.

themselves into semi-independent villages (ban or yan) or towns (muang or mong) each with its own chief called Haan muang (father of muang). Early in the twelfth century A.D. the Tai in the Upper Menam valley made of their muangs small States under their chieftains called Chao. It had all been a slow process so long, but in the thirteenth century there was what has been described by Coedès as an 'effervescence' among the Tai in the middle Mekong area including a part of North Siam. Kublai Khan's conquest of ^{A.D.} Ta-li in 1253 caused a further pressure of Tai population southwards into Upper Burma and 'the no-man's-land bordering on Siam'.

It is necessary here to look into the background of the expansion of Cambodian dominion over Siam, called archaeologically Cambodian or Khmer period. The pre-Khmer ancient kingdom of Funan (or B'iu-nam), which was confined originally to Cambodia and Cochin China developed into an extensive maritime empire in the third century A.D. stretching from the Bay of Bengal in the west to Champa in the east. It also included a major part of the Malay Peninsula. Funan was undoubtedly the first great power in South-east Asia in the early centuries of the Christian era. But near the middle of the sixth century A.D. it was conquered by the Khmer State of Chenla which was to its north. This State ^{had been} ~~was~~ a vassal of Funan. It was a revolt by Bhavavarman and his brother Chitravarma of Chenla, probably to restore the legitimate line, that led to this conquest. According to Briggs Funan still enjoyed autonomy until A.D. 627, when it was incorporated with

Chenla by Isanavarman.⁷ During the seventh century A.D. Chenla seems to have conquered the valley of the Se Mun and all that is now eastern Siam and Laos up to the border of Yun-nan.⁸ The eighth century in Khmer history was a period of unrest and confusion. It is not until the early ninth century A.D. that stability was restored by king Jayavarman II, who succeeded in bringing the whole country under his control. Jayavarman II came to the throne in A.D. 802 and was the first king to ^{transfer} ~~move~~ the capital to Angkor in the north-western region of the Great Lake. Briggs says that after the establishment of the Empire of the Kambuja in that year, the Khmer monarchs of the ninth and tenth centuries seem to have reestablished their authority over the region of eastern Siam and the neighbouring areas to the east. But the Mon States - Louvo⁹ including probably the old Dvaravati and its colony, Haripunjai (Lamp'un) in the north - apparently extending over the whole of western Siam, from the Gulf on the south to the Mekong on the north, remained independent nearly to the close of the tenth century A.D.¹⁰

Punan proper, which occupied the Mekong delta, conquered most of South Siam as well as much of the Malay Peninsula

⁷ Lawrence Palmer Briggs : The Ancient Khmer Empire, p. 42.

⁸ JAOS, vol. 65, 1945, p. 104.

⁹ also Lavo, Lvo, Lopburi, Lophburi, Lophaburi or Lavapura (Navapura). The Chinese called it Lo-hou or simply Lo. Lefevre-Pontalis quotes the Vongsavadan Luang Neua as saying that Louvo was founded by a son of the King of Takasila (Takasila) in the last quarter of the 5th century. (JAOS, vol. 65, 1945, p. 103).

¹⁰ Briggs in JAOS, vol. 65, 1945, p. 104.

early in the third century A.D. According to Reginald Le May even North-East of Siam appears at about that period to have formed part of the Hinduized kingdom of Funan.¹¹ There was also the ancient country of Dvaravati or Dvaravadi which extended over a large part of the region at the head of the Gulf of Siam. It was originally a Mon Kingdom and was Buddhist. It occupied the region around the north-east corner of the head of the Gulf, near the mouth of the Meklong. The land here was above the highest flood-level and the soil was fertile. It was also free from the fevers of the Menam delta. These natural advantages probably attracted the early Indian immigrants to make their settlements in this area which also became in Siam the most important centre of Indian culture and civilization. "The earliest settlement of Dvaravati", describes Briggs specifically "of which we have knowledge was at the present village of P'ong Tuk, a few miles north of the head of the Bay, at the cross-roads between Petchaburi and Rathburi on the south, Kanburi and Muang-Sing on the west, Uthong (Suphan ?) on the North and Nakhon Pathom on the East, and about a day's march from each".¹² Whatever may be the accuracy of the distances there is little doubt about the general position of the earliest Indian settlement. In 1927, on receiving information about finds by the natives at P'ong Tuk, the Royal Institute of Bangkok deputed its Secretary,

¹¹ *Op.cit.*, p. 62.

¹² See also 'The Excavations at P'ong Tuk and Their Importance for the Ancient History of Siam' by George Coedes (*JSS*, 1928, XXI, Part B), pp. 208-9.

George Coedes, to investigate. Excavations revealed ruined monuments characteristic of Buddhism, particularly of the Thera-vada school. They show no resemblance to Khmer architecture and antedate the known advent of the Thai into this region by many centuries. As most of the inscriptions of Dvaravati and Louvo are in Mon and none in Khmer before the eleventh century A.D. nor in Thai at any time, Coedes holds that P'ong Tuk was an ancient Mon city and that it was abandoned before the Khmer conquest of this region in the eleventh century A.D. either due to an epidemic of cholera or a change in the course of the river Meklong.

Nothing definite is known about the relations of ancient Dvaravati and Funan. All that can be surmised is that Funan was the overlord. It was during the seventh century A.D. that the name Dvaravati first appeared in history. The Annals of the T'ang relate how during what was called the cheng-kuan era (A.D. 627-49), ambassadors from Po-li-lo-cha visited the Chinese Court. They also mention Te-houan-lo-p'o-ti as a vassal State of Burma (probably the Pyu) which is doubtful. Huen-Tsang, who visited India in the seventh century (A.D. 629-45), mentions the kingdom of To-lo-po-ti in his enumeration of eastern countries. I-Ching, writing in the latter part of the seventh century A.D. tells of a youth from the Annamite country who was taken as a boy to Tou-ho-louo-po-ti. These names : Po-li-lo-cha, Te-houan-lo-p'o-ti, To-lo-po-ti, and Tou-ho-louo-po-ti, are considered

transliterations of the Sanskrit name Dvaravati.¹³ From the geographical descriptions of the Chinese writers Dvaravati seems to have embraced all the territory between Prome and Chenla, including the Irrawaddy and Sittang deltas, the region which the Pali writers call Ramanna-desa, the Mon country. Though it is well-known that the Mon country was under the hegemony of Sudhammapura (Thaton), yet probably in some earlier period Dvaravati was supreme with its capital at Phra Pa Thom (Nagara Pathama). Charles Duroiselle says that the Mons had conquered Prome from the Pyu and ruled over all of what is Lower Burma. Is it the overthrow of Pyu overlordship? The record in the T'ang Annals that Dvaravati (Te-houan-lo-p'o-ti) was a vassal of P'iao (Pyu) may indicate this. The question requires further investigation.

The Mon kingdom of Dvaravati extended more to the east and north in the seventh century A.D. and founded a colony at Louvo. The latter developed into the kingdom of Louvo with its capital at Lopburi and began to overshadow old Dvaravati. Whether the capital was shifted from Nagara Pathama to Lopburi or Dvaravati and Louvo remained as two separate States no definite assertion can be made. An important event is that about the middle of the seventh century A.D. Lopburi in its turn founded a Mon settlement at Lamp'un, 17 miles south-east of Chieng-mai, on the Me K'uang, a tributary of the

¹³ Briggs : Dvaravati, the Most Ancient Kingdom of Siam, in JAOS, vol. 65, 1945, p. 102. Coedes has restored T'o-lo-po-ti as Dvaravati. Rev. E. J. Eitel in Chinese Buddhism has interpreted it as Dvara-pati (Lord of the Gate). E. J. Thomas takes it to be same as Dvaravati (Dwaraka), the city of Krishna, in Kathiawar.

Meping in what is now north-western Thailand (Siam). It was then occupied by the Lawas, who were apparently animists, pure and simple with a primitive form of culture. This with other settlements side by side developed later as the Mon kingdom of Haripunjai (Haripunjaya). An account of the founding of this kingdom is contained in one of the Laotian Chronicles translated by the Pavie Mission of 1879-95. Pontalis, a French diplomat and later Minister to Siam who was with the Pavie Mission, believed that in A.D. 574 both Louvo and Haripunjai were Khmer kingdoms, but Coedès definitely established that these kingdoms were both Mon.¹⁴ Further, in the districts round Lamp'un, Lampang and P're, which is at a distance of 60 miles to the east of Lampang, Mon tradition is very strong even to this day and the seven inscriptions found at different temples in Lamp'un are all in Mon language and written in a script similar to that of the Mon inscriptions of Pagan. The earliest epigraphical evidence, however, does not take us back much beyond the beginning of the thirteenth century A.D. The Hansa bird, which was the emblem of Mon sovereignty, is often found to adorn the summits of the flag-poles of the monasteries in this area. Two Chronicles in Pali, namely, Camadevivamsa ('The History of Chama Devi')¹⁵ and Jinakalamalini ('The Garland of the Times of the Buddha'),¹⁶ translated and

¹⁴ JAOS, vol. 65, 1945, p.103.

¹⁵ written by a monk named Bodhiramsi early in the 15th century either at Chiengmai or Lamp'un. A large part of his narrative is of a legendary character.

¹⁶ written by Ratanapanna, a monk of the Rattanavana Mahavihara monastery at Chiengmai in A.D. 1516.

annotated by Coedes a few years back, throw further light on the imperfect history of Lamp'un and its development.

According to Jinakalamalini Cama Devi (Cham T'ewi) was the daughter of the king of Louvo (Lavo) and married the king of Ramanna-nagara,¹⁷ which was undoubtedly the capital of Ramanna-desa or the Mon country of Lower Burma. She is said to have left her husband, probably as widow after her husband's death, about A.D. 661-3 and led a missionary expedition of emigrants from Lopburi to North Siam and founded Lamp'un. Her mission was probably the first to introduce Hinayana (Thera-vada) Buddhism in that region. There was a series of wars with the indigenous Lawas for the possession of the country. The History of Nang Kiam Maha Tevi¹⁸ also confirms that Nang Kiam (i.e. Nang Ciam or Cam or Cama Devi) was the daughter of the king of Louvo. She held the title of Maha Tevi (Maha Devi). It is said that Cama Devi was already pregnant at the time of proceeding to Lamp'un, and soon after her arrival there, gave birth to two sons, one of whom became king of Lamp'un, and, the other king of Lampang (K'elang). To this region of Lamp'un also flowed many Mon-speaking immigrants from Thaton and Pegu carrying with them Indianized culture and Buddhism of the Hinayana (Thera-vada) school and soon set up a Mon kingdom under the name of Haripunjai. In northern Siam no traces of an early Chinese influence are to be found except in the temple structure.

¹⁷ probably Thaton, the ancient seat of the Mon kingdom in Lower Burma.

¹⁸ Histoire de Nang Kiam Maha Tevi (Pavie Mission), p.147.

Camadevivamsa says that Cama Devi founded five monasteries in Lamp'un, one being the Mahayana. Reginald Le May says that there is still a temple of that name near the west gate of Lamp'un. Cama Devi is said also to have built another city at Alambanganapuri (Lampang Luang), 10 miles south-west of Lampang and erected a temple there which is one of the finest in Thailand. She retired to Haripunjai after her second son became king of K'elang and died.

About the end of the tenth century A.D., Louvo and Haripunjai were at war with each other and Tai Chronicles refer to it. Jinakalamelini also gives an account of this war. It says that Trabaka, the king of Lamp'un made an attack by river on the kingdom of Louvo (Lavo). When Uchitta-Cakkavatti, the king of Louvo, advanced with his army to meet him, Jivaka, king of Tambralinga,¹⁹ an Indianized Malay State on the Malay Peninsula, advanced northwards with a large force and many ships and seized Lopburi and conquered the kingdom of Louvo. Unable to enter his kingdom Uchitta-Cakkavatti fled towards Lamp'un and occupied it before Trabaka could arrive. The latter then made a second attempt to seize Louvo but it failed and he disappeared from the scene. It is further related in the Jinakalamelini that the king of Louvo invaded Lamp'un, but was repulsed with heavy losses. Briggs refers

¹⁹ Tan-mei-liu, which is the Tambralinga of the Pali Niddesa, was an Indianized ancient kingdom, known to have been existing from the beginning of the 2nd. century A.D. Its first formation is difficult to trace. The region of modern Ligor, then called Nakon Sri T'ammarat (Nagara Sri Dharmarashtra), was its centre.

to a Pali Chronicle of Western Laos as saying that, shortly after the conquest of Louvo (Lavo), a king named Kambujaraja tried to conquer Haripunjai, but was defeated and forced to flee.²⁰ Who was this Kambujaraja ? Nothing definite is known from the records. But Briggs is of the opinion that he was Jivaka's son Suryavarman I, king of Kambuja (Cambodian kingdom).²¹ This king's failure to conquer Haripunjai can also be inferred from several Khmer inscriptions which testify that he remained ruler of Louvo, while later inscriptions found at Haripunjai are in Mon. Suryavarman I, whose father came from Tambralinga, a centre of Mahayana Buddhism, is apparently a Buddhist of that school and with his advent Mahayana Buddhism found a place in Central Siam, while the Mons of Haripunjai were essentially Hinayanist and remained politically independent. From the Lopburi inscriptions of the first half of the eleventh century A.D. it appears that the Khmer kings also allowed Brahminical faiths to come into the kingdom. These inscriptions granted equal protection and privileges to both kinds of Buddhism and the various forms of Hinduism. The people followed the Buddhist faith but the royal Court was surrounded by Brahminical rites and ceremonies, though the king was Buddhist. The royal Buddhist monks, for instance, gave to Suryavarman I the posthumous name of Nirvana Pada, while the Brahmins called him Suryavamsi, that is, one born of the god Sun and as possessing the grace of Vishnu.²²

²⁰ JAOS, vol. 65, 1945, p. 104.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Briggs : JAOS, vol. 65, 1945, p. 104 ; Reginald Le May : op. cit., p. 146.

In the middle of the eleventh century A.D. the northern kingdom of Lamp'un suffered from a great calamity. Camadevivamsa contains an account of how an epidemic of cholera broke out in that region at that time and the people fled en masse to Thaton. But Anawrahta's invasion of that Mon country in A.D. 1057 drove many of them further to Hamsawadi (Hamsavati : Pegu) where they were welcomed by their brethren, because they spoke the same language, that is, Mon. The same Pali work also refers to the people of Lamp'un as Ramanna. Pongsawadan Yonaka records that when the epidemic subsided these people returned to Lamp'un and with them came many Mon-speaking people from Lower Burma who introduced the Mon script in northern Siam. It was from this script probably that the modern Lao script has been developed.

In A.D. 1001 Jibaka's son, Suryavarman I, found an opportunity to seize the throne of Cambodia at Angkor by virtue of his descent through his mother. Just at that time the Khmer throne was in dispute and he proceeded with a loyal band of followers either by the river Se Mun or by sea and landed in the eastern part of Cambodia. After a protracted civil war the ephemeral rule of the then ruling king Udayadityavarman I (A.D. 1001-2) was extinguished and Suryavarman I installed himself at Angkor in C.A.D. 1010. An inscription at Lopburi claims that Suryavarman's empire also included the Mon kingdom of Dvaravati and the Malay kingdom of Tambra-linga, later Ligor.²³

²³ Hall : A History of South-east Asia, p.100.

The eleventh century was for the Khmers a period of violent civil strife, revolts and wars. It was Suryavarman II (A.D. 1113-50), the most powerful king of Khmer history, who not only restored stability to the empire, but also brought more territories under his sway by his conquests on the east and the west. But the Tai Chronicles say that his attempt to annex the Mon kingdom of Haripunjai was foiled. Hall points out that the Sung History described the Cambodian frontiers as the southern border of Champa, the sea in the south, the borders of Pagan in the west, and Grahi on the east coast of the Malay Peninsula. Suryavarman II was the founder of the world-famous Angkor Wat (Temple of Angkor).²⁴

by Suryavarman II.

²⁴ It was conceived and dedicated to Vishnu. A gold statue of Vishnu is mounted on a garuda. Doedes makes it clear that the Vishnu venerated in Angkor Wat was not the ancient Hindu god, nor one of his avataras, but the King Suryavarman II himself, identified with Vishnu after his death. The majestic shrine was erected in order to become his mausoleum when he died. The mausoleum is decorated with beautiful figures of apsaras just like Vishnu himself in his heavenly residence. The image of the king is seen on the bas-reliefs of the south gallery where he is twice represented, once seated in the midst of his court and the other time standing erect on his war elephant. The Wat to the most covers about 500 acres and the topmost tower is of 220 feet above the ground. Reginald Le May, who paid two visits to Angkor, says that "the Great Temple of Angkor dwarfs every other ancient building one is likely to see, and has no compeer for sheer magnificence and richness of decoration". Op.cit., pp. 98, 125, 134-5.

By the time Suryavarman II ascended the throne of Cambodia the Tai had already infiltrated into the Menam valley and had settled in the State of Louvo. According to the Tai Chronicles Suryavarman II's campaigns against Louvo failed. But it is doubtful in view of the contemporary architecture of Lopburi expressing strong Khmer influence. The Khmer failure may be only a particular phase in the campaigns. But after Suryavarman II's death there was great unrest in the Khmer dominions. His son and successor Udayadityavarman II (A.D. 1050-66) had to deal with a series of revolts and also Cham interference in the south of the kingdom. But his redoubtable general Sangrama subdued them one after another. During his reign the great Pagan monarch conquered the Mon country of Thaton in A.D. 1057, and Wood says that he also attacked the Cambodian Empire and brought 'the whole of the present territory of Siam' under his sway.²⁵ Hall also refers to a Thai tradition which asserts that Anawrahta extended his conquests as far as Lopburi and Dvaravati and that the Khmers had to recognize Burman suzerainty over the conquered territories in Siam as the price of receiving back Lopburi. But he points out that there is nothing in support of this story in the epigraphical records and Burmese Chronicles.²⁶ Anawrahta's missionary works, however, influenced Siam from Lopburi to Haripunjai.

Inspired probably by the Tai successes in the north under the leadership of Prince P'rom, the Tai in Central Siam

²⁵ Wood : op.cit., p.50.

²⁶ Hall : A History of South-east Asia, p.101.

also became rebellious and threatened to overthrow the Cambodian rule in the middle of the thirteenth century. The King of Cambodia, Jayavarman VIII (A.D. 1243-95),²⁷ sent General Khlon Lamphong, the governor of the Upper Menam valley, to restore order. But two Tai Chiefs, Hpaw Hkun Bang Klang Thao who had married a daughter of Jayavarman VII²⁸ and Hpaw Hkun Hpa Muang, rulers respectively of two petty States, Muang-Bang-Yang and Muang-Rat under Khmer sovereignty, rose in revolt. The cause of the rising is obscure. With the united strength of their forces the Tai Chiefs defeated the Khmer General in a pitched battle. They then launched simultaneous attacks on Sukhot'ai (Sukhodaya), the northern sub-capital of the Cambodian Empire, and its sister-city Sachanalai (Sajjanalaya), the name formerly given to Sawank'alok (Svargaloka).²⁹ They captured the two cities, which offered little resistance, and also wrested the northern part of the Western Cambodian Empire. At Sukhot'ai Hpaw Hkun Bang Klang Thao, the Chief of

²⁷ He ruled for the longest period in Khmer history, but was without any achievement as a ruler or a builder. He was notorious for committing 'acts of vandalism on the Buddhist images'. Under him Brahman dominance was re-established.

²⁸ Hall : A History of South-east Asia, p.112. Jayavarman VII is supposed to have been the greatest of all Khmer monarchs. He was a Buddhist and under him Mahayana Buddhism became dominant in Cambodia. He introduced the Buddha-raja cult. His chief queen Jayarajadevi 'filled the earth with a shower of magnificent gifts'. He was the builder of Angkor Thom, an impregnable city fortified against Cham invasions, and also the Bayon. He ruled from about A.D. 1181 to 1218. One of his predecessors Jayavarman II, who ruled from A.D. 802 to 854, was the builder of the famous stone temple at Angkor Thom.

²⁹ Reginald Le May : op.cit., p.169.

Bang-Yang, was crowned king under the title of Sri Indrapat-Indraditya (or Hkun Sri Indraditya or Int'arat'itya) by his friend and ally Hpaw Hkun Hpa Muang.³⁰ The title Sri Indrapat-Indraditya was originally given by the Cambodian King to Hpaw Hkun Hpa Muang who transferred it to Hpaw Hkun Bang Klang Thao when the latter became king as recorded in the Sukhot'ai Inscription No. 2. The exact date of Sri Indraditya's coronation is still a matter of controversy. According to Phya Anuman Rajadon it is about A.D. 1252 or 1257.³¹ Sri Indraditya is identified with Sri Surya Phra Maha Dharmarajadhiraja of the Siamese Annals.³² His capital was Sajjanalaya Sukhodaya.

The Western Cambodian Empire at that time had its capital at Lavo or the present Lopburi (Lavapuri). Sukhot'ai was probably its western frontier town or sub-capital of strategic importance. What happened to Lopburi when Hsien or Sukhot'ai-Sawank'alok fell? The question remains as yet unsolved. Probably it continued to maintain its precarious existence as a Khmer city until it was absorbed in the next century by the fast rising State of U-T'ong (Supanburi) under a Prince descended from the famous Chieng-Sen Tai dynasty.

The Tai or Thai who conquered Sukhot'ai are called archaeologically Thai Noi i.e. Little or Minor Thai in contrast to the Shans who are called Thai Yai i.e. Great or Major Thai

³⁰ Ibid., p.169.

³¹ Personal Note from Phya Anuman Rajadon.

³² BEFE-O, XVI, 3, 1916.

vulgarly called Ngio, a word coming probably from the Ngwe Shan as called by the Burmese. Traditionally the Thai Noi are supposed to have come either from among the Thai of Chiengmai (Zimme) or from among the Laos of Muang Luang Phra Bang. But neither the Thai of Zimme nor the Lao call themselves Thai Noi. Yet the possibility of the Thai Noi being an offshoot of the Major Thai cannot be ruled out. It will be further discussed below.

The events in upper Central Siam leading to the historic conquest of Sukhot'ai by the Thai in the middle of the thirteenth century were followed by a fresh development in the north. A Lu (Tai) Prince named Meng-Rai,³³ who succeeded his father as king of Chieng-Sen in A.D. 1259, commenced a brilliant series of campaigns subjugating northern Siam. Reginald Le May says that Meng-Rai (or Mang-Rai) was born in A.D. 1239 and was the son of the last Lawa Chief of Chieng-Sen by a Tai mother.³⁴ Legend says that he was born under miraculous circumstances and possessed superhuman qualities. But this prince is always regarded by the Tai as a Tai and was the son-in-law of the Lu (Tai) prince of Keng-Hung³⁵ (or Chieng-Rung). He was a Buddhist. He moved up a southern tributary of the Mekong and founded Chieng-Rai after his own name in A.D. 1263. He then founded Muong-Fang in A.D. 1273, after which he crossed the divide to the upper Meping. In this campaign

33 Briggs : JAOS, vol.69, 1949, p.71.

34 Reginald Le May : op.cit., p.167.

35 Briggs in JAOS, vol.65, 1945, p.105.

of conquest in A.D. 1287 Meng-Rai suddenly came into a violent clash with Wareru, the Tai ruler of the kingdom of Martaban, which included Thaton and Pegu, over a frontier dispute as referred to above. The dispute was peacefully settled in the end. In A.D. 1292 he captured the Mon capital Lamp'un, thus putting an end to the kingdom of Haripunjai, which was until then a vassal State of Cambodia. He founded there the famous kingdom of Lannat'ai³⁶ (Chieng-mai), called Pa-pe or Pa-pai-hsi-fu by the Chinese and Yonakarattha in the Pali Chronicles, and established his first new capital at Wieng Kumkan (or Kum-kam), the remains of which, says Wood, can still be seen five miles from Chieng-mai. But as this site was a lowland and subject to inundation, in A.D. 1296 he transferred the capital to the present city of Chieng-mai, after selecting the site in co-operation with his brother-princes, Ram Kamhaeng of Sukhot'ai and K'un Ngam Muang of P'ayo.³⁷ By his conquests Prince Meng-Rai made himself master of the major part of north Siam and his kingdom Lannat'ai comprised Chieng-mai, Lamp'un, Nak'on Lamp'ang, Chieng-Rai, Chieng-Sen and the State of Keng-tung (then called K'emat). The only other independent State under a powerful ruler in the north-western part of Siam at that time was P'ayo. P'ayo was originally a small independent Thai principality, which came into existence in A.D. 1096 and whose location was at the junction of the Meping and the

³⁶ Coedes, Laos Occidental, pp. 28-9.

³⁷ Wood : op. cit., p. 56.

Mewang rivers.³⁸ But by A.D. 1296 it rose to be one of the three powerful States not subject to Cambodia.

The impact of the Mongols was felt by the Tai kingdoms of the south soon after the conquest of China by Kublai Khan (Emperor Shih Tsu). Haughty embassies were sent by Kublai Khan to these kingdoms demanding submission. His relations with Siam were two-fold : in the south, by sea with Hsien (or Sien = Syam, Sukhot'ai in Central Siam) and Lo-hu (or Lo-hou, Lavo, Louvo, Lavapura or modern Lopburi in the old Mon kingdom of South Siam or Dvaravati) ; in the north, by land with Pa-pai-hsi-fu (Lan-na or Yonakarattha) of which Chieng-mai was the capital and Ch'e-li (Chieng-Rung or Keng-fung and the Hsip-Hsawng-Pan-na), the country of the Lu (Tai) people.³⁹ According to the Yuan-shih, as translated by Pelliot, the Mongol Emperor established his first contact with Lo-hu in A.D. 1289 and with Hsien in A.D. 1292 through Canton. Ram Khamhaeng was then the ruler of the Hsien country. In the north the first invasion of Pa-pai-hsi-fu was led in A.D. 1292-93 by Mangu Turumish. Under pressure of repeated attacks by the Mongols 'Great Ch'e-li' (Chieng-Rung) submitted in A.D. 1296, but 'Little Ch'e-li', said to lie to the east, or rather south-east, and called by the Tai Lannat'ai, resisted refusing to become a part of Ch'o-li or according to the Mongols revolted.⁴⁰ The Mongol conquerors then organized the

³⁸ Hall : A History of South-east Asia, p.144.

³⁹ Luce's "The Early Syam in Burma's History" in

JSS, XLVI, 2, 1958, p.139.

⁴⁰ JAOS, vol. 69, 1949, p.71 ; also Nan-Tchao ye-tche, 118, 120-2.

Hsip-Hsawng-Panna region as the Chinese province of Ch'e-li (Ch'e-li). It is noteworthy that, probably in anticipation of a possible Mongol danger, in A.D. 1287, the year of the destruction of Pagan by the Mongols and their Shan allies, the three potentates Meng-Rai, Ram Kamhaeng and Ngam Muang, the Chief of P'ayao, met together and concluded a pact of friendship. The pact was apparently to establish a strong Tai confederacy to resist the Mongols on the one hand and fight the Cambodians on the other. Lannatai's power to resist the Mongols may be traced to this pact. It appears that Mongol suzerainty, if it was extended at all to the Tai kingdoms of Northern and Central Siam, was only nominal.

In September, 1297, on the other hand, Pa-pai-hsi-fu (Lannat'ai) invaded Chinese Great Ch'e-li. There is mention of a Chinese expedition of February, 1301 against Pa-pai-hsi-fu, for which the Emperor gave paper money reckoned altogether at over 92,000 'Shoes' (ting in Chinese or Tai). On May 21st. of that year the Emperor moved the Yun-nan army to invade Pa-pai-hsi-fu. Those persons of Yun-nan, who volunteered to go on the expedition, were given 60 strings of cowries each. Even the various 'southern barbarians' on the borders of Pa-pai-hsi-fu agreed among themselves not to pay taxes and imposts to the Chinese authorities, and they robbed and killed the government officials under the Chinese. On account of the ruin of the expeditionary army in the war in April, 1303, the Emperor put to death Liu Shen, and sentenced to flogging Ho-la-tai and Cheng Yu. There were raids and counter-offensives by Pa-pai-hsi-fu and Great and Little Ch'e-li from time to time

for the next seven or eight years until in March 1312 Pa-pai-hsi-fu appears for the first time to have offered as tribute two tame elephants. Raids and temporary submissions on the part of the Tai States on the borders of Siam went on for many years as described in the pen-chi of the Yuan-shih.

The relations between the Tai rulers of Siam and the Chinese imperial authority of that time can be inferred from certain facts. There is, for instance, no mention anywhere of Meng-Rai, the King of Lannat'ai, visiting the Chinese Court. He only visited Pagan in A.D. 1290, which was then ruled over by Shan (Tai) Chiefs under nominal suzerainty of China. He brought back from Pagan a number of artists and artisans for his kingdom. Under Pagan's influence he was also inspired to found in A.D. 1292 the temple of Chieng-man at Chieng-mai.

The son and successor of Indraditya was Ram Kamhaeng (c. 1273 - c. 1317)⁴¹ of Sukhot'ai, whose full title being Pho Khan Ram Kamhaeng Chao Muran Sri Sajanalaya Sukhodaya. He maintained cordial relations with China. The Chinese Annals say that he paid two visits to the Imperial Court, the first in A.D. 1294 while Kublai Khan was alive, and second in A.D. 1300. During his second visit he married a Chinese princess. While returning from China he brought to Sukhot'ai Chinese potters. It is recorded in the Chinese dynastic histories that in A.D. 1289, 1292, 1296 and 1299 Lo-hou (Louvo), Sien (Sukhot'ai) and Pape sent embassies to the Mongol Court. Chinese embassies

41 Indraditya had three sons, of whom Ram Kamhaeng ("Rama the Brave") was the youngest.

also visited the Court of Ram Kamhaeng in A.D. 1293 and 1295 with imperial orders.⁴² Ram Kamhaeng paid tribute to the Emperor regularly all through his reign and also applied for Chinese white horses with saddles and bridles and also gold-thread garments as had been given to his father.⁴³ Ram Kamhaeng was a great statesman and a brave soldier.

The details of Ram Kamhaeng's dominions are known from a postscript⁴⁴ to his inscription. According to the postscript account his dominions extended northwards up to Muong P'le (P're), Muong Man, Muong P'lua on the river Han, and on the other side of the Mekong up to Muong Chava (Luang Phra Bang) which marks the frontier; southwards they extended to the sea and included Sup'annaphum, Ratburi, P'echaburi and Si Thammarat (Ligor); Westwards they reached up to Muong Chot (Me Sot) and the sea; and eastwards, as far as Vieng-Chan and Vieng-Kham which marks the frontier. He also established his suzerainty over Pogu and Martaban when Wareru had to acknowledge his overlordship. But Wood in his History of Siam points out that 'it must not be assumed that King Ram K'emaeng exercised effective control over all these regions. For instance, the Prince of Sup'an had by this time already attained to a powerful position, and the Tai rulers of Lopburi and the ancient city of

42 Pelliot : Deux itinéraires, 240-4.

43 Reginald Le May : op.cit., p.70.

44 Hall gives a translation (vide his A History of South-east Asia, pp.147-49) of Coedes's French version in Les Etat hindouises, p.342.

Ayodhia (both related to King RamK'anheng) were either independent or were subject to the King of Cambodia'.

Ram Kamhaeng extended his conquests to the Malay Peninsula in A.D. 1294 and subjugated a considerable part of it then under the Empire of Srivijaya. The Tai had already penetrated into that region about the middle of the thirteenth century A.D. and since then intercourse had been maintained by them with Sukhot'ai. Had it not been for the Chinese imperial intervention, probably the whole of the Peninsula would have come under the rule of Sukhot'ai. The Yuan Shih says that 'the people of Hsien and Ma-li-yu-erh (Malayu) had long been quarrelling and fighting with each other. Now both submitted'. Ram Kamhaeng's attack on the northern possessions of Srivijaya had begun about A.D. 1280 as recorded in the Mon Chronicles. The new Emperor, Ch'eng Tsung, ordered Hsien : 'Do not injure Ma-li-yu-erh. Do not trample on your promise'. On February 2, 1299, Hsien, Mo-la-yu (i.e. Ma-li-yu-erh) and Lo-hu came to the imperial Court together, and the Crown Prince of Hsien was specially honoured. In the Chinese record Sukhot'ai is mentioned by name as Su-ku-tai when on June 15, 1299 several embassies of southern sea came to the Chinese Court with tributes of tigers, elephants and boats made of sha-lo wood. One of these embassies, that of Hsien, is described in the 'Section on Hsien' in the Yuan-Shih.

Malayu (Malay-Land) is known to have been the first Hindu kingdom established in Djambi in Sumatra in

A.D. 644. A short time afterwards the Buddhist kingdom of Srivijaya in the Palembang River valley of Sumatra became powerful and conquered Malayu and Banka and gained a foothold on the Malay Peninsula.⁴⁵ This expansion of Srivijaya is attributed to king Jayanasa (Jayanaga). The famous Chinese Buddhist pilgrim I-tsing (I-Ching), while on his way to India, came on a Persian ship to Srivijaya and spent six months there studying Sanskrit. He then made his onward voyage to India in a ship belonging to the king of Srivijaya. During his stay at Srivijaya he found there over a thousand Buddhist monks. Mahayana Buddhism, mixed up with Tantric mysticism, was the prevailing religion of the kingdom, the source of which may be traced to Nalanda of the period of the Pala dynasty of Bengal and Magadha. The Chinese royal edict of A.D. 695 mentions ambassadors from Srivijaya.

It is important to note that the Ligor (Vieng Sa) stele, bearing a Saka date corresponding to 15 April 775, at the Wat Sema-muang contains ten Sanskrit verses commemorating the foundation of a Mahayanist sanctuary and celebrating certain victories by a king of Srivijaya of the Sailendra family, thus indicating Srivijaya's conquest of the Malay Peninsula. The Arabs found in A.D. 844 a powerful kingdom, called Zabag, or later Javaka, in the Malay Peninsula with its capital in the Ligor (Sritammarat) region of which the king styled himself 'The Maharaja'. In the eleventh

45. Edwin M. Loeb and Robert Heine-Geldern : Sumatra, (Vienna, 1935), p.7.

century A.D., the Sailendras were still ruling over Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula, though they had lost Java. King Chandrabhanu of Javaka twice invaded Ceylon in A.D. 1236 and 1256 without success. Though Draravati continued to exist in the eighth century A.D. its influence was not in evidence from that time in the south, where inscriptions in Sanskrit or Khmer are only found between the eighth and twelfth centuries A.D.⁴⁶ Srivijaya, with Malayu as its subject State, continued to flourish until in the last decade of the thirteenth century the Tai pressure from the north ousted its authority from the northern part of the Malay Peninsula.

Sukhot'ai under Ram Kamhaeng is called the 'cradle of Siamese civilization'. The king was a devout Buddhist and adopted Thera-vada Buddhism as the official religion. This he did by inviting a renowned teacher of Sinhalese Buddhism from Nakon Sritammarat. There were venerable monks and a Mahathera who had their residence to the east of the city where there were temples. The king could be approached by all his subjects for the redress of their grievances. "Go ring the bell which has been hung up" was the order for calling the king who decides every case righteously. He was the ideal king of Siam. In A.D. 1283 Ram Kamhaeng instituted the present Thai alphabet and its earliest specimen is exhibited in the Stone Inscription⁴⁷ of the same monarch, now

46 JBRS, vol. XIV, Part II - 'Dvaravati'. Also Reginald Le May : *Op.cit.*, pp. 79-80.

47 The translation and transcription of this inscription are given in (i) *Le Siam Ancien* of M. Fournereau, (ii) *Etudes diverses* of the Pavle Mission, (iii) Dr. Bradley in JSS (1909) and (iv) BEHE-O. 1916.

preserved in the National Museum, Bangkok. Until his time various forms of the Cambodian alphabet had been in use in Siam. The alphabet of king Ram Kamhaeng was adopted throughout Siam, including the Chiang-mai dominions.⁴⁸ The inscription is on a large flat slab of stone set in masonry on the terrace beside the ruins of an old palace at Sukhot'ai. The stone was an object of reverence and fear to all the people. It was brought to Bangkok in A.D. 1838 by King Maha Mongkut while he was a priest. Dr. O. Frankfurter remarks ^{that} 'it is a typical Buddhist inscription, recording, not so much deeds of war and conquest, but the happiness which the people of the realm enjoyed in the reign of Phra RamKamhaeng, what he did for the culture of the people, how he understood the Buddhist religion, what are the maxims of Government by which he was guided, how he was the first to use the written Thai character for record.'

'Though modelled on the Indian one', says Phya Anuman Rajadon, 'through the medium of the Khmer or Cambodian characters, the Thai alphabet differs from the Indian and the Cambodian sources'.⁴⁹ The Stone Inscription of Ram Kamhaeng in the National Museum, Bangkok, first presents this early form of Thai alphabet.

It is presumed that the majority of Ram Kamhaeng's subjects, particularly in the southern part of his realm,

48. Wood says that the present western Lao alphabet is a more modern form, corrupted by Burmese influence. The Luang P'rabang alphabet is a form of the Ram Kamhaeng alphabet.

49 Phya Anuman Rajadon : Thai Language, (Thailand Culture Series, Bangkok, 1954), p.28.

were Mons and Khmers. While Ram Kamhaeng established his dominion over western Thailand (Siam), which was until then under the Khmers ; on the east, Louvo regained independence in the beginning of the last decade of the thirteenth century, or probably earlier, as evident from the Chinese records mentioning embassies from that State. Louvo continued to exist as an independent State to the middle of the fourteenth century when it was absorbed by the Thai kingdom of Ayuthia.

How much of culture and civilization Thailand owes to Cambodia and hence indirectly to India is indicated by Coedes who wrote thus : 'From Cambodia the Siamese assimilated its political organization, material civilization, writing and a considerable number of words. Siamese artists learn from Khmer artists and transformed Khmer art according to their own genius, and above all under the influence of their contact with their western neighbours, the Mons and Burmese. From these latter the Siamese received their juristic tradition, of Indian origin, and above all Sinhalese Buddhism and its artistic tradition'.⁵⁰ This is true of the Thai even to-day. But for this inherent power of assimilating the elements of progress, discovered in the new environments, and yet maintaining distinctive national identity, the Thai would have long fallen into the background and lost the position that they occupy to-day.

⁵⁰ Les 'Etats hindouises, p. 370 (Translated by Hall in his A History of South-east Asia p.147).

The tradition is that Ram Kamhaeng lost his life in the rapids of the river at Sawmk'alok and this happened about A.D. 1317, and in this year also died King Meng-Rai of Chieng-mai. The throne was then occupied by his son Loe T'ai. Loe T'ai is comparatively an obscure figure. That he was an utterly weak and incompetent ruler is proved by his inability to defend his father's dominions. Immediately after his accession the king of Pegu threw off his allegiance and attacked and occupied Tavoy and Tenasserim. Loe T'ai also proved absolutely no match for the rising power of U-T'ong. The Prince of U-T'ong annexed large portions of the dependencies of the independent Sukhot'ai kingdom without any strong action by Loe T'ai. According to Wood Loe T'ai died in A.D. 1347 and was succeeded by his son Lu T'ai, who was until then Phra Maha Uparaja (the great Viceroy) at Sri Sajanalaya and had to march with a force and occupy the throne by overcoming the rebels and conspirators. He was also known as Hrdaya Raja. On account of his great devotion to religion he was called Sri Dhammaraja. The Brahmins and mantrins consecrated him and gave him the title of Phra Bat Somdet Phra Chao Kamraten an Sri Suryavamsa Rama Maha Dhamnikarajadhiraja. During his reign the power and glory of Sukhot'ai rapidly declined and she lost her independence.

Lu T'ai was also a scholar. He wrote a book called Traibhumikatha (Traiphum P'a Ruang) in A.D. 1345. He was a specialist in the science of astronomy and corrected the calendar. Under his rule both Buddhism and Hinduism flourished in the kingdom, both Sramanas and Brahmins were respected. He

tried to conduct the people on the way to Nirvan, and constructed many Kuti Viharas (monasteries) and a Cetiya (coitya, stupa) to enshrine the sacred relics. He set up a statue of the Buddha made of different metals and consecrated two statues of Hindu gods, one of Parameasvara and the other of Visnu, in the devalaya of Mahaksetra. He studied both Buddhist and Brahminical scriptures. He invited a Silacarya of Ceylon called Mahasami⁵¹ Sangharaja to his capital and received him with great respect. On an appointed day, the king invited to his royal palace (hema prasada raja mandira) the Mahasami Sangharaja and the whole assembly of theras and bhiksus for taking the pabbajja. The king sat bowing down before the golden image of Lord Buddha and said - 'I thus enter into the religion of our Lord Buddha. I do not either desire Cakravartisampatti or Indrasampatti or Brahmasampatti etc.'⁵² He desired to become a Buddha and to take every creature beyond the ocean of the affliction of transmigration.⁵³ Even as a ruler he tried to become a living ideal of ahimsa showing kindness to all creatures and forgiving offenders instead of punishing them according to law. While thus religion dominated the minds and hearts of these later rulers, the administration became too weak to deal effectively with the enemies internal and external, and the kingdom succumbed to the newly growing political forces of

51 The title of Sami or Mahasami was conferred by the king of Ceylon on foreign Bhiksus, who came there to study Sinhalese Buddhism. The present Mahasami came to Sukhot'ai probably from Pegu where he lived after obtaining the title.

52 quoted by Bose in his The Indian Colony of Siam, p. 47.

53 Hall's translation of Coedes's French version.

the time. According to the Brahmins, the Sukhot'ai dynasty was of the famous Surya Vamsa, and Lu T'ai was known by the Brahminical title Sri Suryavamsa Rama.

THE KINGDOM OF AYUTHIA :

Early in the fourteenth century A.D. a Mon king was ruling at U-T'ong (near the modern town of Sup'an) over a remnant of the old kingdom of Dvaravati. A Lu prince of Chieng-Sen, a scion of the illustrious royal family to which Meng-Rai belonged, wandered down the Meping to Southern Siam and set up a small kingdom at or in the neighbourhood of the ancient capital Phra Pathama and married the daughter of the old Mon king of U-T'ong. On the death of the latter, the throne of U-T'ong fell vacant, probably for want of an heir, and the deceased king's son-in-law, the Lu prince of the neighbouring kingdom, then succeeded to it and became P'ya U-T'ong (Prince of U-T'ong).

The old Mon king of U-T'ong was a great warrior, who, during the reign of Ram Khamhaeng's immediate unwarlike successor Loe T'ai (A.D. 1317-47), subjugated the southern dominions of Sukhot'ai, particularly Nak'on Srit'ammarat (Ligor), Ratburi, P'etchaburi, Tenasserim and Tavoy. When his son-in-law, the young Chao, became the king of U-T'ong with the title P'ya U-T'ong, this Mon kingdom rapidly developed into a powerful Tai kingdom absorbing Sukhot'ai and a large part of the Cambodian territory in the Menam delta and extending suzerainty over the Tai principalities of the central Mekong valley.

In A.D. 1350, this young Chao of U-T'ong founded a new capital at Ayuthia, 45 miles north of Bangkok and on an island formed by the confluence of three rivers, the Pa Sak and two tributaries of the Menam Chao P'ya. It is said to be on or near the site of the ancient city of Dvaravati. The Sanskrit name of the capital in full is said to have been 'Dvaravati Sri Ayodhya' or Thawarawadi Sri Ayudhya of Prince Dhani Nivat.

The formal accession of this prince at the new capital Ayuthia is described in the P'ra Raj P'onsawadan Chabab P'ra Raj Hat'alek'a as follows :- "On Friday the 6th waxing moon of the 5th Siamese month (April), in year of the Tiger, the 2nd year of the decade, of Sakkaraj 712 (A.D.1350), at the auspicious hour given by the Brahman astrologers, the city of P'ra Nakon Ayut'ia (Nagara Ayodhya) was built and Phra Chao Ut'ong came from Sup'anburi (Suvarnapuri) and ascended the throne at Ayut'ia at the age of 37. The Brahmins proclaimed his title as Somdet Phra Rama T'ibodi Sri Sunt'on Borom Bop'it (Ramadhipati Sri Sundara Paramapavitra), King of Krung T'eb Maha Nak'on Bowon T'warawadi Sri Ayut'ia Mahadilok P'obnop'arat Rajat'ani Burirom (Deva-Nagara Maha Nagara Pra-vara Dvaravati Sri Ayodhya Mahatiloka Bhava Navaratna Rajadhani Puriramya), in the same style as the Somdet Phra Ram-narai who ascended the throne in Ayuthia in ancient days".⁵⁴

⁵⁴ Ms. called "Royal Autograph Edition" of the History of Siam by W.A.R. Wood, C.I. E. It begins with the foundation of Ayuthia. Translated by Phra Phraison Salarak (U Aung Thein) under the title "Intercourse between Siam and Burma" in JBR, vol. XXV, Part II, 1935, pp.49-108 and vol. XXVIII, II, 1938, pp.109-176.

(the reference here is to Rama and Ayodhya of the famous Indian epic.).

This first king of Ayut'ia is more commonly known as Rama T'ibodi Suvannadola. The last part of his name Suvannadola is exactly the popular equivalent of U-T'ong.⁵⁵ It should be known that the names of the kings of Siam are generally titles rather than real names. It was customary not to refer to a Siamese king by his name during his life time. Wood informs us that each king had his full style and title inscribed on a golden plate, but these were all lost when Ayuthia was destroyed by the Burmese in A.D. 1767.

Then he conferred on K'un-luang-P'a-ngua, who was the elder brother of his chief queen and whom he called his elder brother, the title of Somdet Phra Borom Rajat'irat-Chao⁵⁶ and appointed him as ruler of Muang Sup'anburi. He sent hisson Phra Ramesuan⁵⁷ to rule over Muang Lopburi.

According to P'ra Raj P'onsawaden Chabab P'ra Raj Hat'alek'a at the time of his accession to the throne at Ayuthia Rama T'ibodi I held sway over the following towns: Malaka (Malacca), Jawa (Java), Tanaosri (Tenasserim), T'awai (Tavoy), Mawtama (Martaban), Mawlamlang (Moulmein), Songk'la, Chantabun (Candrapura), P'itsanulok (Visnuloka), Sukhot'ai (Sukhodaya), P'ichai (Vijaya), Sawank'alok (Svargaloka), P'ichit (Vicitra), Kamp'engp'et (Kamben Vajra), and Nak'on

⁵⁵ U-T'ong in popular sense means 'a golden cradle' (Suvannadola) because the prince was given a cradle of gold by his father. But Prince Damrong says that U-T'ong is simply the Siamese equivalent of Suvannabhumi (Supan).

⁵⁶ Parama Rajadhiraja-Chao.

⁵⁷ Rameswara.

Sawan (Nagara Svarga). Wood says that he was the first king of Siam to rule over the Malay State.

When Ayuthia was founded in A.D. 1350, the Tai principalities of the central Mekong valley were dependencies of Sukhot'ai, which the year before (A.D. 1349) had become subject to Ayuthia.⁵⁸ In the second half of the fourteenth century A.D. two other independent Tai kingdoms flourished in the north and they were the Yun kingdom of Lan-na with Chieng-mai as its capital and the Laotian kingdom of Lan-Chang or Laos in the middle Mekong valley. The kingdom Lan-na maintained its separate existence for several centuries, acknowledging at different times the suzerainty of Lan-Chang, Burma and Siam. It was annexed to Siam finally in the second half of the nineteenth century. Regarding the Laotian kingdom it may be noted that from early in the second half of the thirteenth century the Laotians (Pai-yi), moving into the middle Mekong valley from the north, established their principalities at Muong-Swa (later Luang-Phra-bang), Muong-Pu-Eun (Tran-Ninh), and Vieng-Chan (Vientiane). At first the Tai of these areas were under the suzerainty of Angkor and later under that of Sukhot'ai.

THE KINGDOM OF LAOS :

But in A.D. 1353 the energetic Tai prince of Muong-Swa named Fa Ngoun (or Fa Ngom), with the assistance of the king of Cambodia, deposed his grand-father,⁵⁹ consolidated

⁵⁸ "The Appearance and Historical Usage of the Terms, Tai, Thai, Siamese and Lao" by Briggs in JAOS, vol. 69, No. 2, 1949, p. 73.

⁵⁹ Phaya-Souvanna-Kham-Phong, who was the thirty-fifth king of Muong-Saw and father of Thao-Phi-Fa. See Hall, S-E. Asia, pp. 751-52 and Le Boulanger, Histoire du Laos Français, pp. 39-40.

the small Laotian principalities of the Mekong from the border of Nan-Chao to Cambodia and declared his independence of Sukhot'ai. He seized the plateau of Korat and much of what is now Siamese Laos in defiance of Rama T'ibodi I of Ayuthia and established the independent Laotian kingdom of Lan-Chang.⁶⁰ Fa Ngoun was renowned for his military prowess and earned the title of "the Conqueror". On the west, his extensive kingdom touched the territories of Chieng-mai and Ayuthia and on the east those of Annam and Champa.

The Tai of this kingdom had already come under the influence of Indian culture through Angkor and Sukhot'ai and under Fa Ngoun they were converted to Hinayana Buddhism. Fa Ngoun had been brought up at the Court of Angkor and was married to a Khmer princess. A mission of monks, sent to him by his father-in-law, presented to him the Pali scriptures and a famous statue of the Buddha called the Phra-Bang, which had been originally sent by the king of Ceylon as a present to the Cambodian king. It was installed at Lan-Chang in a temple specially built for it. The city was later named after it as Luang Phra-bang.⁶¹

Fa Ngoun, being essentially a soldier, ruled as an autocrat, and drained so much of blood and toil of his subjects for his ambitious plans of conquest that he became extremely unpopular until in A.D. 1373 he was exiled by his ministers and his son Oun Hneun, a young man of seventeen,

60 "The Appearance etc." by Briggs in JAOS, vol. 69, No. 2, 1949, p.73.

61 Hall: A History of South-east Asia, p.207.

placed on the throne. The young king assumed the official title of P'aya Sam Sene and became known as the 'Lord of 300,000 T'ais', the latter being a figure which he obtained from the census of the male population of his kingdom made by him after three years of his accession. He was married to a Siamese princess of Ayuthia. He reorganized the administrative system on an efficient basis and in this he was influenced by the Siamese methods. He also built temples and schools and encouraged the study of Buddhism. He maintained good relations with his neighbours and under him the country became prosperous and happy.

In A.D. 1421 the Chinese invaded Annam. The great Yung-Lo (1403-1424) of the Ming was then the Emperor of China. King Lan-Kham-Deng (1416-28) of Lan-Chang sent a force to the assistance of the Annamites in their defence, but unfortunately it went over to the Chinese. But the Annamites beat the treacherous Laotians back into their own country, but could take no further action immediately as they were defeated and held in subjection by the Chinese until A.D. 1428. This opportunity was seized by the Chams to recover their province of Indrapura (Quang-nam) from the hands of the Annamites who had annexed it in A.D. 1402. But in A.D. 1428 the great Annamite leader Le Lo'i liberated his country from the Chinese, proclaimed himself King of Annam and founded what was called the second Le dynasty. To avoid friction he accepted the nominal suzerainty of China then under the powerful Ming and initiated friendly relations with the erstwhile enemy

Champa⁶² obviously to rebuild the shattered strength of his country. But later civil war weakened Champa and Annam delivered the decisive blow in A.D. 1471 and annexed her down to Cap Varella leaving only a small chunk beyond it which, too, she absorbed finally in A.D. 1720. Annam became now an empire and the Chams were either largely exterminated or were driven into the mountains.⁶³ Having thus quashed Champa Annam turned on Lan-Chang whose past betrayal she remembered. Le Thanh-Ton (1460-97), the greatest Le monarch of Annam, in A.D. 1478, made a violent attack on Lan-Chang and drove its king, P'aya Sai Tiakap'at (1438-79), into exile.

But a son of the exiled king, T'ene Kham, rallied the Laos forces and drove out the Annamites. He then succeeded to the throne and reorganized the country on a far more efficient basis which rapidly brought prosperity to the people. T'ene Kham was not only a matchless warrior but also showed great statesmanship in the management of the country's affairs. His policy was to strengthen the position of his country by promoting better relations with the powerful neighbour Annam. As a result the Laos people enjoyed a long period of peace during which commercial relations were developed with the Menam valley and the kingdom prospered. The peace was seriously affected in A.D. 1545 when the Laos

⁶² Early kingdom of the Chams and Lin-Yi of the Chinese. The Indianized name Champa for this kingdom first appears in epigraphy only early in the seventh century A.D. It was lying just south of Annam in the eastern seaboard. Its dynastic origins are unknown.

⁶³ K. S. Latourette : A Short History of the Far East, (Macmillan, New York) 1928.

king P'ot'isarat (1520-47) meddled in the succession question of Chieng-mai. Prince T'ai-Sai-K'am of Chieng-mai seized the throne in A.D. 1538 by deposing his father Muang-Kesa, the fifteenth king of that country in the direct line from Meng-Rai. But his misrule and tyranny became so unbearable that a serious rebellion broke out and he was killed in A.D. 1543. King Muang-Kesa was then restored to the throne by the nobles, but after two years he became insane and was assassinated by a group of conspirators headed by one Sen Dao.⁶⁴ Sen Dao, who became master of the situation for the moment, selected the Prince of Kengtung as the next successor, but the latter declined the offer. The throne was then offered to Prince Mekut'i of Muangnai, a 'descendant of Prince K'rua, one of the sons of king Mengrai, the founder of Chiengmai'. But the nobles opposed to Sen Dao met at Chieng-Sen and made a powerful counter-move requesting the Laos king to accept the throne of Chieng-mai for his eldest son, Prince Jai Jett'a (or Sett'at'irat⁶⁵), then a boy of twelve, whose mother was a Chieng-mai Princess.⁶⁶ The chief men of the kingdom immediately appointed a regent in the person of a very capable princess called Maha T'ewi.

When thus Chieng-mai was in trouble king P'rajai of Ayuthia appeared on the scene with an army apparently to punish Sen Dao, the murderer of Muang-Kesa. But Princess

⁶⁴ Wood : op.cit., p.103.

⁶⁵ Jyesthadhiraj ?

⁶⁶ Wood : op.cit., p.104. Hall says Chieng-mai princess was the mother of P'ot'isarat. Probably Wood is right.

Maha T'ewi somehow averted war by persuading him to retire without a blow as Sen Dam was no longer in power. As soon as P'rajai left Chieng-mai Prince Mekut'i of Muang-Nai with the help of the Prince of Yawnghwe invaded Chieng-mai with the intention of seizing the throne, but the invaders were beaten back by the Regent Maha T'ewi. Soon a powerful army from Lan-Chang arrived to defend Chieng-mai for the Laos prince who was to succeed. The prospect of Prince Sett'at'irat's succession to the throne of Chieng-mai then became a certainty. To P'rajai it appeared as a matter of grave concern as it would mean extension of Laotian power to North Siam. He therefore proceeded with a large army to intervene in the succession question. This time Princess Maha T'ewi put up a stout resistance and repulsed the Siamese army. As the army retreated to Ayuthia it was harassed and routed on the way by the Laos army which was already there.⁶⁷

During King P'rajai's absence his palace became a hell of scandals and intrigues. On arrival home he was poisoned to death in A.D. 1547 by his notorious non-royal consort T'ao Sri Sudachen who had in the meantime become pregnant by a lover. What followed afterwards has already been related. Prince Sett'at'irat (also called Prince Jai Jett'a) was crowned as Maharaja of Chieng-mai shortly after P'rajai's death. He ruled at Chieng-mai only for two years when by a hunting accident his father P'at'isarat died. P'ot'isarat

⁶⁷ According to Hall P'rajai's second invasion was after Sett'at'irat's accession. Hall : A History of South-east Asia, p.209. See Wood : op.cit., 2nd.Ed.f.n. p.116.

was a firm believer in Buddhism. He tried to eradicate primitive beliefs in animism among his subjects and establish the pure form of Buddhism. But the experiment did not quite succeed. He was the first Laos King ^{to} develop the commercially more advantageous city of Vieng-Chan (Vientiane) considerably down the Mekong. His death created a scramble for the partition of the kingdom among his other sons. Sett'at'irat preferred to leave Chieng-mai to go and save his paternal kingdom from disintegration.⁶⁸ With his departure Chieng-mai was again reduced to a cock-pit of rival pretenders to the throne. Sett'at'irat announced his intention of remaining at Luang P'rabang (Lan-Chang). The chieftains of Chieng-mai then brought in Prince Mekut'i of Muang-Nai and installed him as Maharaja in A.D. 1549.

In the second half of the sixteenth century the rise of Bayin Naung put the whole Tai world from the Mekong valley to the sea in jeopardy. During his conquests of the Shan States of Nai-Paw and Mong-Nai (Mone) in A.D. 1556 he found that Maharaja Mekut'i was assisting the Shans. Though actually he was aiming at Chieng-mai in this expedition he made it a pretext to invade Chieng-mai in the same year. He besieged Chieng-mai and the city fell after a few days' resistance. Maharaja Mekut'i had to accept the suzerainty of Burma with a Burmese army of occupation stationed in

⁶⁸ According to Hall the hunting accident with death of P'ot'isarat occurred in A.D. 1547 but according to Wood it should be 1549. 1547 was approximately the date of Sett'at'irat's accession in Chieng-mai. Hence there is a difference of two years between the dates given by Hall and Wood.

Chieng-mai. Mekut'i also agreed to pay an annual tribute of elephants, horses, silks and other valuable products of his country.

On Bayin Naung's return to Pegu Sett'at'irat invaded Chieng-mai and by A.D. 1558 would have overthrown his old rival Mekut'i, but the situation was saved at the critical hour by the reappearance ^{of} Bayin Naung with a large Burmese army. Bayin Naung not only drove out the invaders from Luang P'rabang, but also proclaimed the deposition of Sett'at'irat from the throne of Luang-P'rabang. Faced with this serious threat from the greatest Burmese conqueror he formed a large confederation of Shan States. Sett'at'irat then led an expedition against Chieng-Sen. But Bayin Naung's rapid occupation of the territories of some of the Shan allies of Sett'at'irat led to the liquidation of his defensive organization after a year and Sett'at'irat gave up the expedition.

Though at the fall of Chieng-mai other Shan chiefs of the neighbouring States hastened to acknowledge the suzerainty of Burma, Sett'at'irat did not submit and tried to strengthen his position by alliances with other independent Shan States. Bayin Naung returned to Pegu without invading Luang P'rabang. The cause for it is not known. He might have returned for more urgent call from home. As the Burmese danger became very real and ^{might} ~~any~~ come at any moment in the near future Sett'at'irat made an alliance with Ayuthia and secondly transferred his capital to Vieng-Chan (Vientiane) which was built up with strong fortifications. Vieng-Chan

was more conveniently situated for intercourse with Siam away from Burmese interference. He also erected a famous shrine in the new capital and installed in it the celebrated Emerald Buddha (P'ra-Keo) which he had taken away to Luang P'rabang from Chieng-mai while finally leaving that city.

His That Luong, a pyramidal structure, still remains the finest monument of Laotian architecture, though partly damaged by raiders from Yun-nan as late as A.D. 1873.

Bayin Naung's supreme ambition was to become the overlord of all the Tai States. It was partly fulfilled by his conquests of the Tai (Shan) States of Burma and subjugation of Chieng-mai. His arms were now turned to efface the existence of Ayuthia and Luang P'rabang as independent kingdoms. For an attack on Ayuthia he can now use Chieng-mai as the spring-board. While these Burmese plans were maturing king Chakrap'at of Siam captured a number of elephants including seven white elephants. The elephants were meant for strengthening the defence of his realm, but being a possessor of so many white elephants he assumed the title of "Lord of the White Elephants". The king of Burma now found a good pretext to precipitate war with Ayuthia. He sent envoys to king Chakrapat demanding two of the white elephants, but got a negative reply. This was what he had expected to his advantage.

In the autumn of A.D. 1563 Bayin Naung marched with a vast army to invade Ayuthia by the route of Chieng-mai collecting more troops from that country. He led the army via Kamp'engp'et and Sukhot'ai subjugating both. Sawank'alok

and P'ichai easily submitted. The Burmese king passed through P'itsanulok, a country ravaged by famine and pestilence, and made its Governor Maha T'annaraja accompany him with a force of 70,000 men. Thus making a clean sweep over northern and central Siam the Burmese reached Ayuthia in February 1564. The forces under king Chakrap'at were no match for the numerically much more superior army of the king of Burma. When the Burmese commenced the attack both the nobles and the general population of Ayuthia realized the futility of resistance and therefore pressed the king to come to terms with the Burmese king. Accordingly when the two kings met for peace talks the Burmese king demanded immediate delivery of four white elephants instead of the original two and payment by Siam of an annual tribute of thirty elephants together with a large quantity of silver. He also exacted certain customs rights. Further it is said that king Chakrap'at of Siam, his queen and his younger son were taken away as captives by the Burmese, and the Crown Prince Bra Mahein (Prince Mahin) was proclaimed and installed as a vassal king of Siam.⁶⁹ But Prince Damrong gives strong reasons to show that this statement in the Burmese history is wrong. In fact, king Chakrap'at continued to rule and Bayin Naung, being informed of a serious Mon rebellion in his country, hurried back to Pegu by way of Kamp'engp'et leaving

⁶⁹ "Burmese Invasions of Siam" in JSS, V, 1908, I, pp. 21-29. It may be noted that according to the Burmese history the date of the first Burmese invasion of Siam is A.D. 1548, but in the Pali Chronicle of Siam, it is A.D. 1563. The second Burmese invasion is dated A.D. 1563.

an army of occupation in Siam and probably giving a controlling hand to Maha T'ammaraaja. Prince Ramesuen of Siam, who accompanied the Burmese king, died of illness on the way. The Raja of Patani, who came to the assistance of king Chakrap'at with an army and a fleet of two hundred boats during the Burmese invasion, arrived after the Burmese had left, but finding the Siamese king ill-equipped for defence after the Burmese attack suddenly revolted and attempted to seize the throne. King Chakrap'at, who had to flee from the palace for the time being, succeeded in putting down the rebellion.

An event of importance which became a cause of extreme bitterness between king Sett'at'irat of the Laos kingdom and Maha T'ammaraaja, son-in-law and Governor of P'itsanulok, both related to the House of Ayuthia, needs mention here. King Sett'at'irat, soon after establishing his new capital at Vieng-Chan, asked for the hand of Princess T'ep Krasatri, daughter of king Chakrap'at by Queen Suriyot'ai of historic fame, although he had already married one daughter of the same king. At the appointed time fixed for Princess T'ep Krasatri's journey to Vieng-Chan she fell ill and hence king Chakrap'at sent another daughter by another wife to the Laos king. Then came the Burmese invasion of northern Siam and Ayuthia during 1563-64 blocking all communications between the Laos kingdom and Ayuthia. But when the communications were restored after February, 1564, Sett'at'irat returned the newly sent princess of Ayuthia and insisted on sending Princess T'ep Krasatri.

The Pro-Burmese Governor, Maha T'ammaraaja, kept the Burmese king informed of all these developments. In April 1564, when Princess T'ep Krasatri was on way to Vieng-Chan, she was intercepted by a Burmese force near P'etchabun and carried off to Burma.⁷⁰ Since then Maha T'ammaraaja became the most hated enemy of Sett'at'irat.

Reaching Pegu Bayin Naung found to his dismay that the whole city with his palace was burnt down by the Mon rebels aided by the Shan and Siamese prisoners who had been settled in the province. By a vigorous handling of the situation with the help of his army he put down the rebellion and captured thousands of those who took part in it. He would have burnt them all alive had not the Buddhist priests intervened. He rebuilt the capital and his palace even more magnificently than before using at places gold plates for the roofs. The richness of the city is also described by two European writers, Caesar Frederike of Venice and Ralph Pitch of England, who saw it in its most prosperous condition.

In the later part of the year 1564 Bayin Naung discovered a move on the part of Mekut'i to throw off the Burmese overlordship. He therefore sent an expedition under his son and heir-apparent Nanda Bayin against Chieng-mai. Mekut'i fled to Vieng-Chan and Chieng-mai was occupied by the Burmese, who thereafter followed Mekut'i to the kingdom

⁷⁰ This account, says Wood, is contained in two oldest versions of Siamese history.

of Luang P'rabang and occupied Vieng-Chan. Sett'at'irat had left the capital. The Burmese captured Mekut'i and also the queen and Oupahat (or Ouparat) or heir-apparent ^{of the Laos kingdom} /but they failed to capture its king who exhausted them by guerilla warfare. With the prisoners the Burmese returned to Chieng-mai, where they appointed Princess Maha T'ewi as Regent for the second time with a Burmese garrison stationed there and then reached Pegu in October 1565.

In Siam towards the close of the year 1565 king Chakrap'at placed his son Prince Mahin as Regent and himself retired into private life.⁷¹ But the Laos king Sett'at'irat, by his successful defiance of Burmese imperialism, aroused hopes in other Tai rulers, who, with all their traditions of the past, were restive under the Burmese. It was only the strange conduct of Maha T'amaraja that caused a temporary set-back to the growth of a strong front among them capable of overthrowing the Burmese domination. Prince Mahin was bent towards the Laos king for support. But Maha T'amaraja became the watch-dog for his Burmese master and opposed every measure of Prince Mahin if it was thought to be anti-Burmese. P'ya Ram, Governor of Kamp'engp'et, wanted to get rid of the Burmese and hated the Raja of P'itsanulok for his pro-Burmese policy. The Regent, Prince Mahin, appointed P'ya Ram as his chief adviser, who initiated a policy of

⁷¹ According to Hall Prince Mahin was appointed Regent by Bayin Naung before returning to Burma after the second invasion of Siam in 1564 and was placed under the control of the pro-Burmese Raja of P'itsanulok, Maha T'amaraja. See his S-E Asia, pp. 214-15. This would be doubtful if king Chakrap'at was not taken as hostage to Burma. This

alliance with the Laos king and inviting the latter to attack P'itsanulok. When these were done, Sett'at'irat at the end of 1566 marched on P'itsanulok at the head of a large army and invested the city. According to plan Prince Mahin moved from the south with a strong force and a fleet of boats ostensibly to the assistance of Maha T'annaraja but actually to help his northern ally to take the city. The reports of the attack by Sett'at'irat having reached Burma earlier, a Burmese army had already arrived and relieved the siege driving off the Laos back to Vieng-Chan and defeated Prince Mahin and destroyed his fleet.

In July 1567 king Chakrap'at became a Buddhist monk. Maha T'annaraja now became strong enough to demand the surrender of P'ya Ram. The Prince Regent refused to comply with his demand. Maha T'annaraja then visited Burma probably to report the adamant attitude of the Siamese Regent and in doing so he undoubtedly agreed to serve as a vassal Raja of Burma, for the Burmese king conferred upon him the title of Chaopha Song K'we. During his absence there were certain secret communications between Prince Mahin and Princess Wisut Krasatri, wife of Maha T'annaraja, at P'itsanulok. It is said, with her children she was brought to Ayuthia as a hostage against any possible action against Siam by her husband. Prince Mahin also made a misadventure against Kampengp'et then under Burmese control. Prince Mahin was from the beginning a weak and incompetent ruler betraying only his incapacity to deal with every big problem. Anticipating another Burmese invasion he invited Chakrap'at back to the throne and

relinquished his charge.⁷³

In December 1563 Bayin Naung himself marched with an army which is said to be the largest ever landed on the soil of Siam. This huge mass of troops set out from Martaban and passed through P'itsanulok towards Ayuthia, which was determined to resist. The pro-Burmese Maha T'ammaraaja, as expected, accompanied Bayin Naung to the attack. Bayin Naung failed to take the city by storm. He laid siege to it as the alternative course. King Chakrap'at died of illness in January 1569 during the siege at the age of sixty-two. A force was sent by Sett'at'irat to fight the Burmese on the side of his ally, but it was attacked and beaten off. King Mahin, who succeeded to the throne again on the death of his father, proved utterly incompetent and irresponsible in the matter of conducting the defence. P'ya Ram and a few other nobles alone really fought and proved their mettle by inflicting severe losses on the enemy. The siege lasted about nine months until in August 1569 the city fell, not as a result of defeat in the fight but through treachery of the King of Burma. When the city's defences could not be broken through even after a prolonged siege Bayin Naung caused his puppet, Maha T'ammaraaja, to secretly write to his wife, then at Ayuthia, accusing P'ya Ram, the virtual leader of the defence, as the instigator of the war and assuring peace simply if he was delivered up to

⁷³ Hall says that the captive king Chakrap'at was allowed to return to Siam on a pilgrimage in 1567. This was a policy to pacify Siam. But on reaching Ayuthia the pilgrim threw off the yellow robe and joined Prince Mahin in another attack on P'itsanulok. See S-E Asia, p.215. Probably the removal of Princess Wisut Krasatri to Ayuthia as a hostage is referred to by this second attack on P'itsanulok.

the Burmese. This was enough for the foolish and spineless king Mahin to play into the hands of the enemy. He surrendered P'ya Ram and with it the defence collapsed. He also ordered the execution of another bright and brave fighter, his tender-aged brother Prince Sri Sauraja, his fault being his siding with the defence party. With all these suicidal acts he got no quarter from the Burmese monarch. He and all the members of the Royal family were taken away as captives to Burma 'together with a vast concourse of prisoners and a large number of cannon'. King Mahin died of fever on the way. Before leaving Ayuthia Bayin Naung placed on its throne his puppet Maha T'amaraja who was to rule as a vassal of Burma. At the formal coronation, which Bayin Naung attended, Maha T'amaraja assumed the title of P'ra Sri Sarap'et, but he was better known as King Maha T'amaraja. The Burmese levelled down the defences of the city so as to cripple the Siamese power to resist them in future, but exposing the city to other enemies.

For the next fifteen years Siam remained under Burmese tutelage. Thus the Burmese having enormous control over Siam made, among others, two changes of major significance during this period in the system of Siamese Law and in the prevailing Siamese Era. First many Burmese laws and institutions were imposed upon the Siamese and the Burmese Dhammathat,⁷⁴ based on the Laws of Manu, was also introduced and grafted on

⁷⁴ Introduced into Burma by Razan of Pegu in the 13th century A.D. A later version was prepared in the reign of P'ado T'amaraja or Thalun (1629-48), brother of Anaukpetlun (grand-son of Bayin Naung) of Toungoo.

to the Siamese law,⁷⁵ though at present 'the Siamese have freed themselves almost wholly from Manu's paralysing influence'. Secondly, the Burmese Era beginning in A.D. 638 was introduced into Siam where it came to be called Chulasa-
karat or Little Era replacing the prevailing Mahasekarat Era. The Mahasekarat was introduced in southern India by Kanishka in A.D. 78. It is believed that it was introduced into Siam and Cambodia by Kanishka's missionaries.⁷⁶ Chula-
sakar continued to be used officially until 1887 when King Chulalongkorn adopted the European calendar.

The only Tai king, who was still reigning as a sovereign ruler and successfully defied the greatest Burmese conqueror, was Sett'at'irat of Vieng-Chan. This fact gave Bayin Naung no mental rest. He therefore directed his arms the very next year, A.D. 1569-70, to the invasion of the Laos kingdom. But Sett'at'irat frustrated his desperate attempt to take Vieng-Chan by a kind of mobile tactics creating artificial scarcity of supplies and compelled the Burmese troops exhausted by famine and disease to beat a retreat. In A.D. 1571 Sett'at'irat, while engaged in a war in Cambodia, was untraced. His infant son was placed on the throne and one P'ya Sri Suren K'wang Fa⁷⁷ appointed Regent. Bayin Naung wanted Sett'at'irat's brother, the Oupahat, who had been a hostage in Burma since A.D. 1565, should come back and succeed Sett'at'irat as a vassal ruler under Burma. The Burmese envoys sent with this humiliating proposal to Vieng-Chan were murdered

⁷⁶ Wood : ibid.

⁷⁷ The name is given as General Sene Soulint'a by Hall.

by the Laotians. This precipitated a second flare-up.

Bayin Naung despatched his Mon Commander-in-chief with an army composed of levies drawn from Chiengmai and Siam⁷⁸ to attack Vieng-Chan. It was defeated and the Mon Commander is believed to have been punished with death or exile by the Burman monarch. In the dry season of A.D. 1574 the King of Burma himself undertook the invasion and made Prince Naresuen of Siam, the elder son of King Maha T'amaraja, accompany him. Prince Naresuen fell ill with small-pox on the way to Vieng-Chan and was left behind with his Siamese auxiliaries to return home. Vieng-Chan was taken, the Regent driven out, young Prince Nokeo Koumane captured, and Oupahat placed on the throne as a vassal of Burma. Bayin Naung's dream was fulfilled, however short, and the eastern limits of the Laos kingdom marked also the extreme limits to the east attained by Bayin Naung's Empire. He returned to Burma with Prince Nokeo as hostage.

But from A.D. 1575 to 1592 there was no stability in the Laotian kingdom. A series of revolts broke out and the Oupahat could not control the situation. In A.D. 1581 Bayin Naung died and his son Nanda Bayin ascended the Burmese throne immediately to fight the powerful disintegrating forces of his empire at work. In A.D. 1591 the leading monks of the Laos kingdom represented to Nanda Bayin that if peace was to be restored the legitimate heir, Prince Nokeo, be returned for the throne and under Siamese pressure it was readily complied with. In A.D. 1592 Prince Nokeo Koumane formally succeeded to the

throne of Vieng-Chan and united Luang P'rabang which in the meantime separated itself. After having firmly settled the government he proclaimed the independence of the kingdom.

The destruction of Ayuthia offered an opportunity to King Boromaraja of Cambodia to invade Siam in A.D. 1569. But the Cambodians suffered a bad defeat contrary to their expectations and retired. This was a good ground without Burmese opposition to reconstruct the defences of Ayuthia and also to purchase heavy arms, such as cannon, from the Portuguese. Maha T'annaraja felt deep aversion to Burmese subjection. He had two sons. The elder P'ra Naret (later Prince Naresuen), called Black Prince, was a brilliant general and clever; the younger Prince Ekat'otsarot, called White Prince, was a man of peace, unwarlike and to the foreigners a 'careless man'. P'ra Naret earlier proved his perfect generalship by putting down a rebellion of the Shan State of Muang Kum for Burma which the Burmese generals failed. The Burmese Court looked upon his talents as a future menace to Burma and conspired to kill him. In A.D. 1584, when the Prince of Ava revolted Nanda Bayin invited P'ra Naret to help him, but employing two Peguan nobles to meet and kill the Prince on way to Burma at a place called Muang K'reng. The nobles moved by his personality divulged the plot to him. P'ra Naret at once held a conference of his Generals and the Peguan officials at Muang K'reng and declared the independence Siam in May 1584. Border populations soon joined him and he marched on Pegu and laid siege to the city, but withdrew when the news of the defeat of Ava's Prince arrived.

Muang K'ireng Declaration and the siege of Pegu terribly upset Nanda Bayin on return from Ava. He immediately sent an army after P'ra Naret headed by the Crown Prince. The Siamese Prince inflicted a crushing defeat on the Burmese on the banks of the Sittang⁷⁹ and himself shot dead the Burmese General, Surakemma. With the Siamese Prince came away from Burma large numbers of Shan prisoners to P'itsenulok. Nanda Bayin failed to take back the prisoners even by sending a force which was beaten back. Only two Governors, those of Sawank'alok and P'ichai, remained loyal to the Burmese king in fear of punishment. The Black Prince stormed these cities and executed both the Governors. Nothing succeeds like success. For the first time Cambodia voluntarily formed an alliance with Siam and even helped the latter with an army to attack Chieng-mai.

As his eastern dominions were being wrested from his hands by the rising star, the Black Prince, Nanda Bayin made a big-scale preparation for the invasion of Siam. He was to be joined by the Governor of Chieng-mai, Tharawadi Min, and the Governor of Sukhot'ai. In December 1534 Nanda Bayin marched on Ayuthia across the Three Pagodas Pass, but the energetic Black Prince inflicted a number of defeats on the Burmese and drove them off across the frontiers. The Chieng-mai army which arrived late at Chainat met with a similar fate and retired. Nanda Bayin made the Governor of Chieng-mai responsible for the defeat and

⁷⁹ Hall says Menam valley, but the musket used by P'ra Naret in this action was known as "the Musket of the Battle of the Sittaung River". - Wood : op.cit., p.133.

ordered him to attack Siam again and the Crown Prince was sent to his aid. Wood refers to Chien-mai Annales as saying thus, "In the year 947 (1535-6) the King of Burma ordered Chien-mai to attack Ayuthia. When the Chien-mai army got near Ayuthia, the Siamese defeated and scattered them". This defeat is not mentioned in the Burmese history. Nanda Bayin planned a fresh invasion of Siam for which an army of 250,000 men was made ready. The Black Prince was prepared for it. He stocked enough food and ordered the destruction of what could not be harvested. In January 1537, the Burmese made a three-pronged attack on Ayuthia. The Black and the White Princes resisted with wonderful vigour and fortitude inflicting disproportionately heavy losses in men and material on the invaders who also ran short of rations and suffered from diseases. With no hope of victory Nanda Bayin raised the siege and retired to Burma. He, relieved of the Burmese siege, also drove out the Cambodians, who, under King Satt'a, tried to stab Siam from behind by an attack in disregard of the basic agreement of alliance. The Black Prince, whose personality and genius regained independence for Siam by setting at naught the Burmese might, eminently deserves to be called Prince Narasuen, the Great.

In A.D. 1590 King Maha T'amaraja died and P'ra Narot became King of Siam as King Narasuen at the age of thirty-five. He appointed his brother Prince That'otsarot Maha Uparat.⁸⁰ Siam's

⁸⁰ The first appointment of 'Maha Uparat' or Crown Prince is known to have been made, according to Wood, in the Siamese history in A.D. 1435 by King Trailok of Siam. The idea was borrowed from India. Maha Uparat, says Wood, held 40,000 acres of land or ten times as much as the highest officials.

liberation encouraged a series of revolts in the Shan States against the Burmese. Nanda Bayin, therefore, wanted anyhow to curb Siam's power and twice invaded Siam with very large armies. But the Burmese were defeated by King Naresuen and his brother who killed several Burmese Princes including the Crown Prince in combats. Nanda Bayin lost all hope of conquering Siam. Thrills of the personal combats of these Siamese war leaders are described in the Annals. For lagging behind in the charge in the second of the above two Burmese wars two reputed Siamese Generals, Chao P'ya Chakri and P'ya P'rak'lang, were despatched by the King for capturing Tavoy and Tenasserim from the Burmese, these being Siamese dominions from the time of Ram Kamhaeng but lost to the Burmese in A.D. 1568 with the fall of Ayuthia. The Generals advanced in A.D. 1593 and annexed both the areas by defeating the Burmese on land and in a number of naval engagements. The towns of Tavoy and Tenasserim were important centres of foreign trade. In the same year King Ramesuen made a drive against Cambodia and occupied Battambang. The Cambodian King fled to Luang P'rabang and his brother Prince Sri Sup'anma, placed on the throne with a Siamese army of 6,000 men, remained a faithful vassal of Siam until his death in A.D. 1618. Wood says he introduced in Cambodia 'Siamese customs, garb and ceremonial'. After A.D. 1502 Siam under Ramesuen played the aggressor against Burma, brought under its control the whole of Pegu by A.D. 1604 and took under protection the Shan States of Hsen-Wi, Mong-Hang and Mong-Nai. The rest of the nineteen Shan States became virtually free. Meanwhile Chieng-mai, which had become split into two parts, was reduced

to vassalage and the Siamese boundary reached the frontiers of China.

Next King Ekat'otsarat was less prone to wars and more interested in working for the financial stability of the kingdom. He allowed many Japanese to settle in Siam and even had body-guards from amongst them. It is said that these Japanese later massacred officials, sacked Ayuthia and departed with treasures.

With the accession of the Alaungp'aya or Konbaung Dynasty in Burma in A.D. 1752 there were serious threats to the eastern Tai kingdoms. Alaungp'aya's ambition was to revive the glories of Bayin Naung. He sent a punitive expedition against the raiding Manipuris creating havoc amongst them, received the submission of the Shan States and completed the conquest of the Mons. His last enterprise was the invasion of Siam on the pretext that the Siamese refused to surrender Mon rebels who had gone to their country for refuge. He swept northward over Tavoy and Tenasserim and encircled Ayuthia in A.D. 1760. Boromoraja V (Ekat'at) was then the king of Siam. During the siege which was directed by Alaungp'aya himself an explosion from a siege gun mortally wounded him. Neither were the Burmese prepared for a long siege. The siege was abandoned and the Burmese went back to their country. It was left for the third king Hsinbyushin (1763-76), son of Alaungp'aya, to complete the unfinished task.

In A.D. 1766 the Burmese armies made a three-pronged drive on Ayuthia, one from Chieng-mai, the second from the Three Pagodes Pass and the third from the south

occupying Mergui, Tenasserim and the whole of Siamese territory in Malay. The column marching from the south was held in check only by the redoubtable half-Chinese General, P'ya Taksin.⁸¹ But when the Burmese closed in upon the capital the Siamese Generals had to fight for its defence. The historic assault was delivered in February 1766. "While the Burmese, scattered over all the provinces, were carrying on a war against men and nature", says M. Turpin, "the King (Mhat'at) and his superstitious ministers put all their trust in their magicians. The officers and soldiers followed their example and consulted them as to how they might render themselves invisible in order to attack the enemy unawares, and the hope of learning a secret so favourable to their cowardly nature, prevented them from going out to fight before it had been revealed to them".⁸² There is a substratum of truth in this statement, otherwise except P'ya Taksin's no real resistance was offered on other fronts until the blow fell on the capital. Even small settlements of the Christians with their churches succeeded in most cases in protecting their properties by defeating the Burmese raiders. At one place the Portuguese sabred a crowd of Burmese who had attempted to storm their college and drove them off.⁸³ Not that the Siamese inherently lacked courage, but were steeped in superstition which undermined their vigour and initiative. The chief

⁸¹ P'aya Tak in Burmese history. His father was half-Chinese and mother Thai.

⁸² Turpin's *History of Siam*, vol. II, (Translated from the French by Cartwright, Bangkok), 1908, p.161.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, pp.163-64.

characteristic of Burmese invasions was always their inordinate greed for loot and for that they resorted to all ^{of} manner/barbaric tortures.

The Burmese made good arrangements for supplies and reinforcements arrived after the rains. There was a difference between the king and P'ya Taksin who incurred displeasure for firing some of the cannon at the enemy without waiting for royal permission. The General then forced his way out with 500 brave followers and took refuge at Rayong on the Gulf of Siam. The city fell on April 7, 1767⁸⁴ under violent attack with cannon fire from all sides. The Burmese carried out its complete destruction, the palace, principal buildings and thousands of private houses being burnt to ashes. The King's mortal remains are said to have been found at the royal gate. There was a great sack. The towns-folk irrespective of age and sex were flogged and tortured to make over their treasures or savings. They burnt the soles of their feet in order to make them reveal where they had concealed their wealth. Rape and plunder became the order of the day. Gold images of the gods were melted down for the metal. All books on Siamese history and culture and other records were consumed by the fire set to them by the enemy. This Burmese vandalism will ever remain a black spot in the history of the race. Glutted with Siamese treasures the Burmese returned home with a large number of captives including some members of the royal family and high officials

84 According to Turpin 28th April 1767. Op.cit., p.167.

only to face a Chinese invasion under General Ming Jui which threatened Ava, the Burmese capital. Early in A.D. 1768 the situation in Burma became critical.

P'ya Taksin seized this opportunity to make a drive for the liberation of Burmese dominated areas. He soon established his control over the neighbouring districts of the south with his small force and captured Chantabun in June 1767. This success drew around him thousands of followers. In October, with a fleet of boats, he sailed up the Menam and attacked T'anaburi opposite Bangkok and occupied it. Its Governor Nai T'eng In, a renegade Siamese, appointed by the Burmese authorities was captured and executed. A force was despatched against P'ya Taksin from the main camp of the Burmese army of occupation at Three Bo Trees close to Ayuthia. The Siamese section of the force deserted and joined P'ya Taksin who pursued the rest and delivered a fierce attack on the camp winning a complete victory.

But for this portion of the Siamese territory the rest was then split up into four independent kingdoms. The Governor of Nakhon Srit'ammurat assumed the title of King Musika and ruled over the Peninsular provinces. Korat and the eastern provinces were under a son of King Maha T'ammaraja II (Poromokot) of Siam. P'itsanulok was under King Ruang who was its Governor previously. The extreme north was made into a theocratic kingdom of Fang by a vicious Buddhist monk. Rataburi was still under Burmese control. But P'ya Taksin assumed royal power and established his capital at Dhonburi on the west bank of the river Menam instead of

at the ruined city of Ayuthia whose reconstruction would have been costlier and started his campaigns for the reunification of Siam. He had no rest. But he achieved the goal of reuniting Siam by defeating the monarchs of the dismembered country and ousting the Burmese. In the north General Chao P'ya Chakri⁸⁵ distinguished himself by repulsing the Burmese in a series of engagements when the latter made yet further attempts through Chieng-mai during 1775-6 to reconquer Siam, the last major attack being led by the famous Burmese General, Maha Trihathura. Earlier some of the Burmese generals went over to Chao P'ya Chakri and enacted a great slaughter of the Burmese, who then fled in disorder across the frontier and Chieng-mai fell into the hands of the Siamese. Cambodian monarch Harek once again tried to stab Siam in the back when P'ya Taksin was busy in his northern campaigns. P'ya Taksin retaliated by driving him out and placing his rival Rama P'ibodi on the throne as a vassal of Siam. In A.D. 1777 Chao P'ya Chakri crushed another rebellion in K'orat and executed the rebel leader. When he returned to Bangkok from this expedition he was given the rank of a Royal Prince with the title of "Supreme Warlord". About this time King Taksin under enormous strain developed insanity and the direction of affairs passed more and more into the hands of General Chakri.

After certain rebellions were put down General Chao P'ya Chakri⁸⁶ assumed the crown with popular support with

⁸⁵ not to be confused with the General Chao P'ya Chakri under King Narasuen.

⁸⁶ named Phra Buddha Yodfa Chulalok.

the title of Rama T'ibodi or King Rama I (1782-1809).

'To ensure the internal tranquillity of the country', says Wood, 'all the principal officials urged Chao P'ya Chakri to agree to the death of the ex-King ; he finally accepted their counsel, and King Taksin was executed'. King Taksin was then forty-eight and ruled over the whole of the former Kingdom of Ayuthia without Tavoy and Tenasserim and was suzerain over most of the Lao States, including Luang P'rabang. He was one of the most remarkable figures in Siamese history, who, from a humble position as a leader of a guerilla band, reunited on a firm footing a completely shattered kingdom within the space of a decade and a half. King Rama I founded modern Bangkok as the capital of Siam and with it the modern period of Siam begins. Since then / the kings of the Chakri Dynasty have been ruling over Siam to this day.

As regards the Laos kingdom it was split up into two independent but mutually hostile States in A.D. 1707 with capitals at Vieng-Chan and Luang P'rabang. When Alaung-p'aya, the Burmese conqueror (1752-60), marched eastwards Vieng-Chan saved herself by helping the Burmese to conquer Luang P'rabang. In A.D. 1778 the Siamese General Chulalok captured Vieng-Chan and carried off the Emerald Buddha to Bangkok which was afterwards installed in a temple within the palace precincts. Since A.D. 1782 the State of Vieng-Chan remained a vassal of Siam. But in consequence of an aggressive attack by the vassal ruler Anou of Vieng-Chan on Bangkok in 1827 the Siamese devastated it and kept the kingdom

under their control. Later history is one of adjustments of boundaries between Siam and the French and British controlled areas. The French expansion in Tongking became a matter of grave concern for Siam and when in 1881 Vietnam was reduced to a French protectorate, King Chulalongkorn of Siam sent strong reinforcements to defend Luang P'rabang upto the basin of the Black River. Luang P'rabang had been under Siamese suzerainty for about a century and in the French official maps it was shown as part of Siam until 1886. The French authorities, by appointing Auguste Pavie as Vice-consul in the Laos capital on May 7 of that year, also indirectly recognized Siamese suzerainty over that State. The famous Pavie missions,⁸⁷ particularly the second one of 1890, were for exploration and scientific study of the geography of the Laos country and to 'produce a definite statement on the nature and value of the products of the Mekong basin'. But their ultimate object was 'to pave the way for another big annexation of territory by France'. The French demanded all the territory east of the middle Mekong as Annam, now their protectorate, had 'incontestable rights' over it. The presence of Siamese authority there was dubbed as an invasion by Pavie. After prolonged disputes and a clash with the French warships at Paknam resulting in casualties to both sides, Siam in 1893 had to yield with payment of indemnity and the French blockade was called off. Yet pending the Siamese evacuation of the east bank of the Mekong the French occupied Chantabun. Under the Anglo-French agreement of January 1896 Mong-Sing went to France and both countries guaranteed the independence of the Menam Valley, other parts of

⁸⁷ Mission Pavie : Indochine 1879-1895, 11 vols., 1898-1919. It is a monumental and scholarly work of great importance.

Siam being excluded from the scope of the agreement. By a Franco-Siamese treaty of 1904 Siam renounced her rights over Luang P'rabang and France evacuated Chantabun. By further agreements subsequently boundaries between Siam and British and French territories were adjusted stage by stage until we have the present maps.

The kingdom of Laos with 17,00,000 population became independent of France in 1954. To-day it possesses a democratic form of government and a king who lives in the Royal Capital at Luang P'rabang, the Administrative Capital being Vientiane. Laos is under-developed in every respect. In recent years there have been internal troubles between Laos under royal control and the north (Samneua and Phongsaly) under communist dominated Pathet Lao. The things have not yet come under settled conditions by a complete unification of the country.

In Siam the early years of the Chakri dynasty were marked by frequent but indecisive wars with Burma and by expeditions to the northern Malay States over which Siam claimed suzerainty. These wars came to an end in the middle of the nineteenth century after the annexation of Burma by the British. King Mongkut (1851-68) first opened the door for European influence by the treaty of Friendship and Commerce with Britain in 1855. Sir John Bowring from England played the main role in it and occupied a key position in shaping Siam's foreign relations and concluding treaties for her with European powers. Mongkut had a group of Europeans around him - Bishop Pallegoix, Caswell and Bradley - from whom he learnt astronomy, mathematics, English and Latin. He employed Europeans to reorganize the government services. A distinguished Belgian lawyer, Rolin-Jacquemins, reformed the legal system and Major Gerini of Italy organized the military cadet school. Unlike other oriental

monarchs Mongkut had the unique foresight to set the process of a silent revolution along European lines and in it he utilized the best available European talents. It was during the reign of Chulalongkorn (1868-1910) that the greatest development and modernization of the country took place. Employing British experts he placed the country's finances and the fiscal system on a sound basis. Princes, educated in Europe, undertook reforms in the education and judicial systems. Chulalongkorn abolished the debt slavery, reformed Court etiquette, established many kinds of modern scientific, technical and research institutions and the Civil Service.

Until 1932 Siam was an absolute monarchy. The successful coup d'état of 24 June, planned by a group of foreign-educated young civilians under the leadership of Luang Pradit Manudharma, transformed it into a constitutional monarchy. The Constitution, signed by King Prajadhipok (1925-35) on 10 December 1932, provided that sovereign power emanated from the Siamese nation and the king was to exercise the legislative power by and with the consent of the Assembly of People's Representatives, the executive power through the Council of Ministers, and the judicial power through the Courts duly established by law.³⁸ The existence of a comparatively large standing army, coupled with contests between personalities, and not any major differences in policy, is at the root of the recent crises and governmental changes in Thailand. Yet she preserves her freedom and prosperity more through diplomatic tact than by the power of her arms.

38 W.D. Reeve : op.cit., p.26.

CHAPTER VI

THE TAI KINGDOM IN ASSAM : THE AHOM DYNASTY

Even as early as the eighth century A.D. the Tai Empire of Nan-Chao is known to have extended its sway over Upper Burma and Assam. This light has been thrown by the T'ang history as already referred to above. But the exact nature and period of this Tai control over all or a part of the present Assam can not be known from the records as yet available. But the foundation of an independent Tai kingdom in Assam was laid for the first time only in the early part of the thirteenth century A.D. when there was a great westward movement of the race.

1. Hso-Ka-Hpa (1228-68) :

Chao-Lung Hso-Ka-Hpa, the founder of the Tai-Ahom Dynasty in the Brahmaputra Valley of Assam, was the third son of Phu-Chang-Khang alias Chao Changnyeu, a scion of the Mong-Ri Mong-Ram line of kings of Hkun-Long's family. Phu-Chang-Khang, who married the daughter of Chao Tai-Pong of Hsen-Se, was made Chao-Hpa of Mong-Mit Klingdao¹ (Mong-Mit Keng-Lao) in A.D. 1202 or 1204.

¹ called in Burmese and Assamese Buranjis Mung-Mit-Kup-Kling-dau (or nau). The Hsen-Wi Chronicle's version that this vacancy was caused by the death of Hkun-Yi-Kwai-Hkam, who had left no issue, can not be accepted as it is not supported by chronology.

Hso-Ka-Hpa was born while his mother, Nang-Mong Blak-Hkam-Hseng, was putting up with her father, Chao Tai-Pong at the latter's residence. He was born not later than A.D. 1189 during the life time of Chao Tai-Pong, who named the grand-son Hso-Ka-Hpa.² According to the Hsen-Wi Chronicle Phu-Chang-Khang (or Sao Hpo-Hsang-Kang) had four sons, Hkun-Tai-Hkon, Hkun-Tai-Hkai, Hkun-Tai-Tao, and Hkun-Sam-Awn. Hkun-Tai-Hkon had a daughter and a son named Nang-Ye-Hkon and Ai-Pu-Hkon.³ In Tamil Phukan's Assam Buranji as well as Ney Elias's History of the Shans, Hso-Ka-Hpa is said to have had two elder brothers, Hso-Zot-Hpa and Hso-Hkam-Hpa.⁴ These may have been titles assumed by the sons of Phu-Chang-Khang, as mentioned in the Hsen-Wi Chronicle, on being made Chao-Hpas.

Hso-Ka-Hpa was brought up at Hsen-Se, the capital of Mao-Lung, by his maternal grand-mother. As Pa-Moo-Pong, his maternal uncle and ruler of Mong-Mao, had no son, he was nominated as the successor to that throne. He passed his early nineteen years⁵ at the capital of Mao-Lung. But, when later on, Pa-Moo-Pong's wife gave birth to Hso-Hkam-Hpa, Hso-Ka-Hpa abandoned the hope of the Mong-Mao throne.

² AB, p.45.

³ Hsen-Wi Chronicle, GUBSS, I.I. p.237.

⁴ Tamil Phukan: Assam Buranji (Calcutta, 1906), p.9 ; Ney Elias : op.cit., p.50.

⁵ These years or Laknis of the Tai Sexagenary Cycle (or Hpe Wan) are mentioned in the original Tai-Ahom text as Mongken, Plakcheu, Katplao, Kutngi, Rungmao, Taoshi, Kasheu, Kapshinga, Dammut, Raishan, Mongrao, Piekmit, Katken, Klutcheu, Rungplao, Taongi, Kamao, Kapshi, and Depsheu.

Phu-Chang-Khang ruled his States for seven years from A.D. 1202 to 1209.⁶ Before his death he divided his kingdom among his sons. He gave to Hso-Zot-Hpa the country called Tai-Po (or the State of Hsi-Paw or Burmese Thi-bo) and to Hso-Hkam-Hpa Tai-Pong or the Nara country, of which Mong-Kawng (Mogaung) was the capital. But he installed his third son, Hso-Ka-Hpa,⁷ who was then twenty-three (Lakni Katrao), as the king of his own States, Mong-Mit and Keng-Lao (or Mong-Mit Kupklingdao). Ney Elias says Chau-Kang-pha (Hso-Hkam-Hpa) was the elder and Chau-zot-pha (Hso-Zot-Hpa) the second son. He further says that Tai-Pong was the southern maing or district of Theinni (Hsen-Wi), but it is doubtful. Even to this day the Hukawng Valley is known to the Tai people as Mao-Pong. Tai-Pong, it is believed, is another name for Mao-Pong and it extended from Kameng (Ka-maing), which was twenty-five miles north-west of Mong-Kawng to the Patkai. But there was a time when Mao-Pong or Tai-Pong comprised the whole area of the present Mogaung, Hukawng and Khamti. Thus Tai-Pong was the early Nara country of wider extent and Mong-Kawng was its capital.⁸

Hso-Ka-Hpa ruled over the kingdom of Mong-Mit Kupklingdao with great ability for eighteen years. Meanwhile

⁶ N. Elias : p. 52. But DAB, (p. 215), 17. Dynastic List gives the period of rule as A.D. 1204-1211. N. Elias's period appears to be correct, and here both the Shan and Burmese eras agree. It also fits in with the dates of Hso-Ka-Hpa's subsequent movements. Hsen-Wi Chronicle's version that he ruled only for two years can not be accepted as it differs from several other records that agree that it was seven years.

⁷ AE, p. 24.

⁸ P. K. Buragohain : Ahamar Adi Buranji (Jorhat,

Hso-Hkan-Hpa, who had succeeded to the throne of Mong-Hao in A.D. 1220, soon entered upon an ambitious career of conquests with the help of his brother, the renowned General Sam-Long-Hpa and his mightier arms reduced, among others, the kingdom of Mong-Mit Klingdao and Sung-Ko to vassalage under Mong-Hao.⁹ The eldest son of Phu-Chang-Khang, Sao Tai-Hkon (Hso-Zot-Hpa ?), who refused to surrender, was executed at Sung-Ko, the capital of the kingdom, on the east bank of the Irrawaddy.

Hso-Ka-Hpa had the first disappointment when his prospect of being chosen as the king of Mong-Hao was doomed, and the second and greater disappointment came when, after an interval of eighteen years of peaceful reign in his paternal kingdom, he had to surrender its independence to the Mong-Hao Chief. The latter event was the major cause of his reluctance to continue in his home country, and it seems, when he had left it, his elder brother Sao Tai-Hkai (Hso-Hkam-Hpa ?) was appointed by Hso-Hkan-Hpa as its ruler. The immediate cause of Hso-Ka-Hpa's departure from his kingdom was a conflict, in A.D. 1227, between Hso-Hkan-Hpa and the ruler of the country called Jun-Lung (or Yun-lung or Yon-lon) over the boundaries of their respective kingdoms in which he was asked to join. Probably the conflict arose from Hso-Hkan-Hpa's expansionist policy. His ambition was to consolidate under his leadership the entire Tai (Shan) world,

9 Hsen-Wi Chronicle, in GUESS, 1.1. p.239.

including the land of the Yun Shans in the middle Mekong and the Upper Menam valleys. He must have visualised that this would vastly increase the strength of the Tai-Shan nation politically and militarily by eliminating the quarrels between the independent or semi-independent petty Shan principalities. Hso-Hkan-Hpa summoned his vassal, Hso-Ka-Hpa, by a letter to help him with his forces in the campaign against Junlung. But the latter did not respond to his call. At this, Hso-Hkan-Hpa thought of forcing him to take part in the war. When Hso-Ka-Hpa suspected this intention of the Mong-Mao Chief, he wrote a reply to him in these words : "The king of Jun-Lung is my relation just as you are. If I take your side and help you, all kings, descended from the same original family with us, would blame me. Hence I did not go when you called me".¹⁰ Having received this letter Hso-Hkan-Hpa determined to capture him and the latter became aware of it. Hso-Ka-Hpa also knew that Hso-Hkan-Hpa was too powerful for him. Hence he decided to quit his country. He left his country with his wife and followers for Mogaung, where prince Noi-Hsan-Hpa (alias Hso-Hkan-Hpa) was ruling.¹¹

Who was Noi-Hsan-Hpa ? Ney Elias says that Noi-Hsan-Hpa or Chan-Kan-hpa was the son of the great Mong-Mao king Hso-Hkan-Hpa and became Sawbwa of Mong-Kawng (Mogaung : Pali Udigirirata or Skr. Udayagiri-rastra). But, as already

¹⁰ Naoboicha Phukan's Buranji, DHAS, Transcript, vol. IX, pp.175-76 ; A brief reference in Tamuli Phukan's Buranji, p.9.

¹¹ Naoboicha Phukan's Buranji, Tr. Ibid, p.176.

said above, the Hsen-Wi Chronicle says that Hso-Hkan-Hpa had only one son, named Hkun-Pu-Hkam. He was born in China as his mother had gone to live in that country owing to a quarrel with her husband. After Hso-Hkan-Hpa's death, the ministers of Mong-Mao approached Hkun-Pu-Hkam and offered him the Sawbwaship of Mong-Mao, but the latter refused the offer and suggested the name of his son, Hkun-Pu-Kaw or Ai-Pu, for it. Secondly, it can not be expected that Hso-Ka-Hpa, after having offended Hso-Hkan-Hpa, would go to his son for refuge. Further, there are indications that Hso-Hkam-Hpa of the Nara country was the elder brother of Hso-Ka-Hpa and that they belong to the same family.¹² Thus it is difficult to accept the relationships as described by Ney Elias. Hso-Hkam-Hpa was given the Nara country (Tai-Pong or Mao-Pong) by Phu-Chang-Khang prior to its occupation by the Mong-Mao general Sam-Long-Hpa. After the conquest of Mong-Mit Kupklingdao, Hso-Hkan-Hpa probably appointed him to rule that country and subsequently, about A.D. 1227 or earlier, transferred him to Mong-Kawng (Mogaung) as its Sawbwa when Sam-Long-Hpa was engaged in his western campaigns. Tamuli Phukan says that 'this very king Noi-Hsan-Hpa is called Sukhranpha in the Assamese Buranjis'.¹³

When Hso-Ka-Hpa came away from his original kingdom of Mong-Mit Kupklingdao, he brought with him 'a large force

¹² Tamuli Phukan : op.cit., p.12 ; Banhsadia Buragohainr Buranji in DAB, p.89. Here the Nara king could not be Hso-Hkan-Hpa, the Great, of Mong-Mao who already turned enemy of Hso-Ka-Hpa. He must be the Mogaung Sawbwa.

¹³ Ibid., p.12.

composed of cavalry and infantry armed with cannon, guns and gun-powder so as to be able to fight his enemies and also there were other followers and servants'.¹⁴ On arriving at Mong-Kawng, he sent ahead messengers to inform its king (Chao-Hpa) and king Noi-Hsan-Hpa, on getting the information, welcomed him and arranged for his stay in the capital with his army and followers.

King Noi-Hsan-Hpa learnt from Hso-Ka-Hpa all about the political developments in Mao-Lung and why he had to quit his kingdom. Noi-Hsan-Hpa desired that Hso-Ka-Hpa should possess a kingdom in this new country. As Hso-Ka-Hpa had a large army with superior weapons Noi-Hsa-Hpa suggested to him that it would be possible for him to found a kingdom by subjugating the south-western part of the Nara country, apparently the Upper Chindwin region, which was inhabited by tribes, who used only bows, arrows, swords and spears in fighting.¹⁵ Probably at this time Hso-Ka-Hpa received an invitation from Sam-Lung-Hpa and decided to proceed to Assam.

Sam-Long-Hpa, while he was still engaged in his Eastern Assam campaigns, was perhaps aware of Hso-Ka-Hpa's flight from his native country. But after his defection from his brother, he seems to have invited Hso-Ka-Hpa to join him in the Tipam-Namrup area, otherwise the reason of Hso-Ka-Hpa's crossing of the Patkai remains unaccounted for

¹⁴ Naoboicha Phukan : op.cit., p.176.

¹⁵ Ibid., p.177.

in history. It may, however, be assumed that Hso-Ka-Hpa had already some knowledge of Eastern Assam during his Chutiya expedition referred to both by Ney Elias as already described and also in the Tai-Ahom Chronicles at least at two places. Now probably Sam-Long-Hpa's invitation brought him new hopes and encouragement and he took leave of his brother, the Chao-Hpa of Mong-Kawng, to try his fortune in the land of his dream.

Both Francis Hamilton (Dr. Buchanan) and Pemberton refer to a Hkuntai (Tai Prince), who remained near the hill Choral Khorong to the south of Garhgaon and Pemberton makes the significant statement that the place mentioned 'was probably the site chosen for a residence by Samlonggha'. This Hkuntai was no other than Hso-Ka-Hpa, who made Choral Khorong hill (Charaideo) the capital of his territories, which extended from Tipam to that area along the eastern borders of the valley. Pemberton's account further says that Hkuntai's (Hso-Ka-Hpa's) brother is called Nara-Rajah by the Singphos or tribes occupying the mountains south-east of Assam to this day and that Nara-Rajah was the tributary prince of Mogaung. These statements as well as the Banhgadia Bureghain's Buranji confirm the facts related above.¹⁶

Some of the Assamese Chroniclers write that Hso-Ka-Hpa stole away ^{the} statuette of the royal tutelary deity Chum-sheng from the place of Noi-Hsan-Hpa. When, after

¹⁶ Fr. Hamilton : An Account of Assam (DEAS, Gauhati), 1940, p.1 ; Pemberton : op.cit., p.110 ; DAB, p.89.

Hso-Ka-Hpa's departure for Assam, Noi-Hsan-Hpa could not find the statuette, he suspected Hso-Ka-Hpa and sent after him men to capture him. But they could not overtake him and returned from a place, which, on that account, is called Nara-Ulata (the place from which the Naras returned). This story has no foundation, rather it is an unnecessary reflection on Hso-Ka-Hpa's character. In the original Tai-Ahom text Hso-Ka-Hpa is said to have brought the statuette from the place of his grand-father, and not that of Noi-Hsan-Hpa.¹⁷ Nara-Ulata may be a place from which the Nara-Raja himself accompanying Hso-Ka-Hpa or his escorts and guides sent with the latter returned. Nara-Ulata is a place not far from Margherita up the Buri Dihing. There is also a popular belief that Nara-Ulata is really Lara-Ulata, that is, the place from where the Lara Raja returned after pursuing Prince Gadadhar Singha upto the foothill and this is an event of a much later date. But it is not to be had in any old record.

In this arduous journey across the wild country of mountains, inhabited by warlike aborigines, such as the Nagas, he was accompanied by a distinguished body of faithful and valiant nobles and chiefs (Phu-Kin-Mongs)¹⁸ from a number of Shan States who joined with their own contingents of armed forces. They might have joined him from time to time

¹⁷ AB, p.44 ; DAB, p.5.

¹⁸ Phu = a male, kin = eat or enjoy, mong = a town or a kingdom, meaning 'a kingdom-eater', that is one who administers a country. It is translated into Assamese as 'Raj-Khowa'.

and some might been even tributary to Mong-Kao. Among the States, from which military aids arrived for him under the command of their chiefs, the names of five are specifically mentioned in the Tai-Ahom Chronicle and they are Mong-Hkan, Mong-Hkru-Dai, Mong-Hka Mong-Pun, Mong-Phu and Mong-Li.¹⁹ Hso-Ka-Hpa also had with him many great men and nobles of his Court, of whom the Chronicle mentions the names of Hkun-Ra, Hkun-Phrang, Hkun-Ring, Hkun-Hseng and Hkun-Pin-Kin. All these chiefs and nobles cast in their lot with Hso-Ka-Hpa and quitted their countries for good and therefore could not have left their families behind to the mercies of the enemies. Then there were a few members in the party who appear to be of the priestly families. The names of these members are given as Thao-Mong-Lung-Kang ; Thao-Khen-Lung ; Thao-Mong-Ber-Rai ; Chao-Phrang ; Thao-Mong-Mashan,²⁰ who descended from Shangbun, who, in his turn, was a descendant of Laakhri ; Thao-Mong-Mashai²¹ who descended from Mawung ; Thao-Mong-Kang-Khru-Mong ; and Len-Tai-Mong. Of the above personages Thao-Mong-Ber-Rai or Thao-Mong-Klin-Man-Rai was the Chao-Phrang-Mong (Bura Gohain) and the Phu-Kin-Monh or Chief, Kang-Ngan or Thao-Mong-Kang-Ngan, was the Chao-Thao-Lung (Ber Gohain) of Chao-Lung Hso-Ka-Hpa, or they were appointed to those offices by the king.²²

19 AB, p. 44. Phu-Kin-Mongs coming from these States were respectively Ta-Hkun-Lak, Hkun-Klang, Pha-Lung-Hkun-Lang, Kang-Hku-Mun, and Kang-Ngan.

20 The fore-father of the Deodhais. See AB, p. 25.

21 The fore-father of the Maw-Rung or the Mohans. See *Ibid.*, p. 25.

22 Tamuli Phukan : *op.cit.*, p. 10. 'Bura Gohain' and 'Ber Gohain' are the Assamese equivalents of the original Tai-

As to the total strength of the party or armed force that moved with him, various numbers are given in the Assamese accounts of a much later period. Not only the numbers themselves are based on wrong calculations, but they vary also from 480 to 1080. The Tai-Ahom Chronicle and the Deodhai Asam Buranjii give a number of nine thousand and it seems to be a reliable figure from the circumstances described in the accounts of Hso-Ka-Hpa's westward movement. From the manner of description it appears that barring other followers, the regular fighting force of Hso-Ka-Hpa was estimated at nine thousand strong with three thousand matangs or cooking vessels, made of copper, each for a squad of three men.²³ He had with him also three hundred war horses fitted with saddles and blinkers and one tusked elephant, named, Kham-Kaw-Mong, one female elephant, named Chu-Kip-Kat and an elephant-keeper, named Phrang-Pem. Records are silent about how the heavy arms were carried along the difficult mountainous routes.

It is also said that there came with Hso-Ka-Hpa his three wives including the chief queen and they were Ai-Me-Chao-Lo, Nang-Sheng-Chum-Hpa and Yi-Lo-Weng-Ching-Chum-Hpa.²⁴ Of these Ai-Me-Chao-Lo was probably his chief queen.

²³ The Tai text says 'sham ring matang ding maw khuu cham kin le sham kun'. (See AB, p.44) meaning Three thousand cooking pots (red being of copper) bent low on one side. Each cooking pot boiled rice also eat (to lick) just enough three men. DAB, says conveying the same idea - 'bhatar tekeli tamar, tintar bhat eketate sije, ene tekeli tini hezar, praja na hezar'. pp. 5-6.

²⁴ P.K. Buragohain in Tai Sanskriti, (Gauhati), 1.2., 1956, p.81. The names are also mentioned as Ibin Chaolu (Chief queen), daughter of Thaomong Kanangan or Kang-ngan. Aimet Chaolu and I-Yong-Silvina. Translated by

There followed in the wake of the marching army parties of sturdy and adventurous village folk - men, women and children - from various places along the route, not only in the hope of getting better amenities of life in the newly conquered lands, but also out of profound faith in the ability of Chao-Lung Hso-Ka-Hpa, the veteran Chief of Mao-Lung. P.K. Buragohain, who spent about twelve years in Upper Burma and collected, among other businesses, a considerable amount of information about the history of the Tai, once visited the Tai villages in the Hukawng valley and learnt that most of the Tai people of the valley, and in some areas entire villages, followed Hso-Ka-Hpa to Waisali (Assam).²⁵ That may be one of the reasons why there are now only a few Tai (Shan) villages in the Hukawng valley proper.

As Hso-KepHpa advanced from Mong-Kawng towards the Patkai via the Hukawng valley he reduced to submission the local tribes found along the routes he followed and their neighbouring areas. The places he marched through were the villages of Kat-Rung-Mong-Wan, Mong-Na-Mong-Ti, Khok-Chang-Bing-Min (Natikhakia) and Ta-Bing-Men (Opar chakua) of the Nagas, Chak-Chang-Khrai (Sakhal), and Shanke. He also attacked the principal village of Mong-Kham, one hundred and eight miles from Mong-Kawng, in the Hukawng valley and conquered it. Mong-Kham (or Mainkwan) was, it is said, called Mung-Kham after the name of a Naga chief of the

25 Buragohain : op.cit., pp. 46-47.

Yong-kuk Naga tribe. It was his headquarters from where he controlled the whole neighbourhood. It became Mong-Kham after its conquest by Hso-Ka-Hpa.²⁶ Then he proceeded on to Lang-Mi-Che-Kau and then to Maw-La-Khrang. Then he came to Mong-Kham Mong-Pan and thence to Pha-Ke-Che-Ring. Pha-Ke-Che-Ring (State or country of the Phake people), was the area to the south of the Doi-Kham hill and just to the west of the Loglai river, through which the stream called Digam Pani seems to flow, was the earlier home of the Tai-Pha-Ke community, the name being Assamised into Phakial in Assam. After leaving this place he appeared at the principal pass of a mountain ('Doi') which he then crossed ('Kham'). Thus the mountain, which Hso-Ka-Hpa had to cross before reaching the Patkai, became known as Doi-Kham. In the Tai-Ahom text the words are 'Kham Doi' which means 'cross mountain'. Later European explorers wrote the name as Digam or Digum. Digam or Digum Bum²⁷ (Doikham in Shan) stands conspicuously to the south of the Patkai. To the north of Digum Bum and south-west of the summit of the Patkai there is a large triangular valley having a vast sheet of water in it called "Nong-Yang" several miles long, and a wooded island towards the eastern extremity. But Macgregor, who visited that area, says that 'the lake appeared to be $\frac{3}{4}$ miles long by $\frac{1}{2}$ mile wide'. Digum Bum is not less than 3,000 to 4,000 ft. high, the surrounding hills

²⁶ This piece of information is supplied to me by Pho Mya of Sang-Ke-ling Khamti in Upper Chindwin. Of course, I have not been able to verify it. I found Pho Mya a well-informed person who could give me certain other pieces of very correct information regarding the Tai of Upper Burma.

²⁷ in Singpho means mountain. Macgregor crossed it

north and south being lower by 1,000 to 2,000 ft. than it.²⁸ He crossed the Daikham hill and came to the boundary of the Naga country. He then crossed the river Kham-Jang or Kham-Yang and stopped near the Nong-Yang Lake. As he proceeded down from Kham-Jang, the following persons and families accompanied him, namely, Thao-Mong-Hkun-Tang, Thao-Mong-Ke-Hkam, Thao-Mong-Hkun-Ta-La, Thao-Mong-Hkun-Tai-Ren (Ren = house i. e. family), five Ka-Lang-Sku families, Lan-Tai-Mong and Luk-Phi-Ma families.²⁹ The community, called Kham-Yang, who later migrated and settled in the Margherita area of Eastern Assam, had their earlier home in Kham-Jang (Kham-Yang). The Assamese know them to be Khamjangias. In the Deodhai Asam Buranjī Hso-Ka-Hpa is said to have crossed next the Nam-Jang river or stream and encamped on the bank of the Nong-Jang (Nong-Yang) Lake. The waters of this great lake on the Patkai is regarded as sacred by the hill tribes. The Nong-Jang or "Nongyang River" falls in from the west after a course of twelve or fourteen miles, mainly between two high and continuous ridges, each called Patkai and then passing through the lake flows out east into the Loglai or Laklai which, in its turn, flows south and east to the Turong.³⁰ Major C.R. McGregor, who surveyed the passes over the Patkai range during 1884-5, mentions in his Military Report on the Khamti-Singpho countries

²⁸ See S.E. Peal's Note on the old Burmese route over Patkai via Nongyang in RASSB, 1873-81 Selections - K.A.S. pp. 69-82.

²⁹ AB, p. 39.

³⁰ Peal's Note : Ibid., p. 74.

1885, (pp. 34-5) of "an old inscription in the Ahom language, which is said to have been cut on a rock at this ford (the Nongyang³¹ river) in 1223 A.D. when the Ahoms, coming from Mainkwon, invaded Assam. The Ahoms are said to have brought elephants and ponies with them". Whether the inscription, mentioned in this statement, refers to one during the reign of Hso-Dang-Hpa (1397-1407), or was a separate one of the time of Hso-Ka-Hpa, it is not clear. From his encampment on the great lake he subjugated the Naga villages called Kharukhu, Pungkang, Tithang, Bingleo, Latema, Lanpeng and Taroo. The two villages, Iulnam and Iuka were destroyed. He also conquered the Nagas of Taputapu. The whole region between the Doikham and the Patkal with the river Kham-Jang in the central area was made into a province called Kham-Jang (Kham-Yang) or rather Upper Kham-Jang over which Kang-Khru-Mong was appointed Governor by Hso-Ka-Hpa.³²

He then declared Kham-Jang as his territory of which the eastern limits formed the boundary between the Nara country and his realm. He also fixed annual tributes to be paid by the inhabitants in local produce. It may be particularly noted that there moved with Hso-Ka-Hpa a miniature secretariat manned by scholars, which was directed by him at this place 'to maintain a full written record of whatever is discussed at any time, whenever a death occurs to anybody, whomsoever

³¹ nam, water or river ; Yang from Jang, sparkling or clear ; nong, lake. Ahom J becomes Y in Hkamti or Shan.

³² AB, p. 45.

we happen to meet'.³³ It was nothing but the traditional method of systematically recording events and the Tai-Ahom Chronicles are based on such records.

Having settled the administration of the area of Kham-Jang, Hso-Ka-Hpa resumed his march and arrived at Doi-Kao-Rang,³⁴ where he made his next camp. Here he ordered his generals to conquer the Naga country of the high and low hills. The Nagas of the villages, Papuk, Tengkhani, Khunkhat, Khunteng, Tongching and Jakhang gave battle, but were defeated with heavy casualties and their villages were destroyed. Uncompromising hostilities were at times severely dealt with to serve as a deterrent. The inhabitants of other villages then voluntarily submitted. Having thus subjugated the Patkai region and forced his way to the northern side of the Range by the Nong-Yang-Patkai Pass he moved towards the Nam-Ruk (Nam-Ruk) via Kham-Nang-Pu along the bank of the river Nam-Pong or Nam-Bong. The Nam-Ruk, which is a river of six tributaries, falls into the Old Dihing (Buri Dihing, a Bado name). The Old Dihing and the New Dihing (No-Dihing) are in the upper courses bifurcate from one river rising from the Dapha Bum, north of the Mramti-Long valley. It flows over a certain distance and then divides itself two

³³ BBB in DAB, p. 90.

³⁴ Doi, mountain, Kao, nine, Rang, unite, meet i.e. collection of nine hills or where nine ranges converge. The name was given by Hso-Ka-Hpa and it is a Tai-Ahom word. Peal, who travelled that area, says "At the site in question, but one range is crossed from water to water, whereas to the west at least 8 or 9 conspicuous ridges must be crossed ere the plains are reached beyond. The name 'Doikaurang' was bestowed by the first Ahom Raja 'Chukhapha'." BASE, 1873-81, K.A.S., p. 75.

streams, the upper one being called No-Dihing which falls into the Lohit and the lower and western one being called Buri Dihing which flows westwards and falls into the Brahmaputra below Dibrugarh.

At the confluence of the Nam-Pong and the Nam-Ruk rivers Hso-Ka-Hpa ordered his men to make a number of rafts, and when they were ready, he, with his whole party including his armed forces and the three hundred horses, got on them. Just before starting, he said prayers to the river for granting a safe voyage. They then rowed down and came to the river Dihing (Buri Dihing). From the confluence he rowed up the Dihing with his force and encamped in the area called Mong-La-Khen-Ten-Sha. According to the Deodhai Asam Buranji La-Khen and Ten-Sha or Tel-Sha were two villages. The inhabitants of this area appear to have voluntarily submitted to Hso-Ka-Hpa, who then placed Hsun-Tang as the Governor of that province. Thereafter he came downstream the Dihing (Nam-Tin of Hso-Ka-Hpa, 'because of the water being very cold')³⁵ and arrived in Mong-Tipam through the present Tirap Frontier Division.

Though we do not know much about the position of Mong-Kham, which he had subjugated, and the Hukawng valley, his whole series of conquests from the Doi-Kham hill to Mong-La-Khen-Ten-Sha, brought under his control enough territory, resource and population, to constitute a kingdom of

³⁵ AB, p. 46.

these days. This part of the region between Burma and Assam is not known to have been conquered either by Ko-lo-feng or Sam-Long-Hpa. It therefore became a real domain of the Tai prince Hso-Ka-Hpa originally acquired by dint of his arms. The descriptions in the Chronicles show that Hso-Ka-Hpa's fightings were not so much to eliminate hostile elements from his way as to conquer this hill country and place it under the administration of his own officers. Naga peoples of many areas also voluntarily submitted to him and accepted his rule as a matter of preference to purely tribal life. The new regime guaranteed to them not only greater security and peace, but also brought to them a culture and forms of political and economic organization far more advanced than hitherto known to them. Hence, after the initial opposition to the unknown adventurer, the hills peoples soon began to appraise the enduring benefits that Hso-Ka-Hpa's government could bestow upon them. Even to this day, the names of Hso-Ka-Hpa and Hso-Pat-Hpa (Gadapani) are lovingly uttered and treasured up in the traditions of the Hills peoples from the Naga Hills to Garo Hills.

Hso-Ka-Hpa, with his army and followers, came by the riverway of the Dihing and entered the valley of the Brahmaputra in the region called Tipam, an area of low hills. The great Mac general Sam-Long-Hpa already made himself master of the Tipam-Namrup area after conquering the Chitaya kingdom, of which it was a dependency. Hso-Ka-Hpa had then a consultation with Sam-Long-Hpa and the result was that he succeeded the latter in this country, called by the Tai

Mong-Dun-Hsun-Kham³⁶ and by the Buddhists of Burma Wei-Sali-Long. In corroboration of more extensive conquests of Sam-Long-Hpa in the area of modern Assam including the North-east Frontier Agency there is mention in the Assamese sources that before the arrival of Hso-Ka-Hpa the Nara Raja collected tributes not only from the Chutiyas, but also from the Kacharis, Marans, Nagas, Barahis and Kamateswar and for the collection of such tributes three officers were sent - one for the Kamata and Barahi countries, one for the Chutiya and Maran countries and one for the countries of the Kacharis and the Nagas. The last officer, after collecting the tributes of his area, joined Hso-Ka-Hpa, who out of affection named him Bimun Patar. Bimun Patar's family is known as Maran Patar. The other two officers also soon joined Hso-Ka-Hpa and later became Garhganya Hendikoi.³⁷

2. Hso-Ka-Hpa made his headquarters in Mong-Tipam,³⁸ the present Jaipur-Man-Phakial area of Eastern Assam, and his Tai people formed their first settlements in Assam in this locality on the Dihing bank. He held his court at this place aided by his two able ministers, Thao-Mong-Klin-Lan-Man-Rai and Thao-Mong-Kang-Ngan, who were the Bura Gohain

³⁶ Mong, country, Dun or Nun, full, Hsun, garden, Kham, gold or golden i.e. 'country full of golden gardens'. In another sense, Suvarnabhumi yielding rich golden harvests (golden-coloured rich paddy fields). Both this name and Weisali were applied to Eastern Assam. Burmese called the country Athan (th for s in Burmese) and early European geographers like Van Den Brouke Asam. Gait points out that in the Vamsavali of the Koch kings the word Asam referred to the Ahoms and not to the country. He rejects, and rightly, the sense of 'uneven' as distinguished from Samatata, for the term nowhere occurs prior to the Ahom occupation. Op.cit., p.245.

³⁷ The Ancient Chronicles of Assam (K.A.S., 1922) Ed. by H. C. Goswami. p.32.

and the Bar Chain respectively and received the tributes collected under Sam-Long-Hpa (the Nara Raja). He lived there for three years, but finding the country subject to inundation by the waters of the Dihing during the monsoons he shifted his headquarters to Abhoipur³⁹ down from there. Before leaving Tipam he appointed Kang-Ngam (or Kan-Ngan) as the Governor of that province. Abhoipur was superior in fertility but densely forested with a few scattered villages. He lived there for five years trying to develop the area so as to attract more population. As the plans failed to attract population he crossed over the Brahmaputra (Lohit) to the north bank and landed in the country called Habung. After three harvests he abandoned that country owing to damaging floods during the monsoons and crossed back to the south bank, this time entering the Dikhau⁴⁰ river which flows into the Brahmaputra⁴¹ to the west of the Dihing. He advanced upstream to Dilihmukh⁴² during the flood season. At this place he tested the water of the Dilih river by dipping his hand into it and holding it in his palm and found that it was flowing from Tipam. As he had no doubt

39 Halaguri in some Assamese Buranjis, but both seem to refer to the same area nearer to the Brahmaputra.

40 Evidently an earlier Bodo name. The Tai-Ahoms called it Nam-Shao (nam, water, shao, clear, which means a river of clear water).

41 called Nam-Deo-Hpi (Nam, water, river, Deo, star, Hpi, god i.e. river of the Star-God) or simply Nam-Ti-Lao which means the river Lohit. Ti-Lao appears to be a Tai distortion of Lohit caused by the transposition of syllables after the Tai method of word construction.

42 River Dilih was named Nam-Khun by the Tai-Ahoms. (Nam, river or water, Khun, muddy i.e. a river of muddy waters). It flows from the northeast via Tipam-Namrup and falls into the Dikhau (Nam-Shao).

that the area around Dilimukh was of a lower level than Tipam and hence subject to inundation, he went farther up the river Dikhan to a place called Mong-Run Mong-Ching⁴³ which was a valley at a higher level. Here he took the weight of the water of another stream, called Silpani, flowing into the Dikhan and found that equal quantity of water of that stream weighed twice that of the Dikhan river. From this Hso-Ka-Hpa named the river Sang-Tak,⁴⁴ which name later became applicable to the whole area.

There is a significant mention in the Deodhai Asam Buranji⁴⁵ that king Hso-Ka-Hpa sent an envoy from Sang-Tak with valuable presents⁴⁶ to Hso-Khran-Hpa's place to inform the latter that "we are at this place". Then Hso-Khran-Hpa in return sent his greetings with a number of presents.⁴⁷ In this way, the two kings ruled in amity and friendship. This reference to Hso-Khran-Hpa in the Assamese Buranji undoubtedly means Hso-Ka-Hpa's brother Hso-Hkam-Hpa or Noi-Hsan-Hpa, the ruler of the Nara kingdom. Such communication between Assam and Burma was made possible by Hso-Ka-Hpa's conquest of the hill country over which he firmly established his rule by appointing Governors.

Hso-Ka-Hpa spent two years at Mong-Run Mong-Ching and then, leaving Ta-Hsun-Lak as Governor of this province

⁴³ Mong, country, Run, valley, Mong, country, ching, high level, the highest layer. Hence the country of the high valley.

⁴⁴ Sang, two, Tak, a balance, meaning double the weight, or twice heavy. Place and river names were given by Hso-Ka-Hpa according to their significant characteristics. It was a Tai practice.

⁴⁵ DAB, p. 8.

⁴⁶ The presents, among others, were a silver water-vessel with a spout, pieces of Court dress and fine cotton
valents were cross-bows. Gold-

he proceeded downstream the river Dikhau and arrived at Simaluguri. There he halted and offered a feast to his nobles and followers by killing cows. Here he sent spies all around to make an idea of the place and found that "there were three thousand and three hundred ghats⁴⁸ in the Nam-Deng⁴⁹ river". This indicated a strong concentration of population in the neighbourhood and a source of potential danger to his nascent State. Hence he left Simaluguri soon for Ti-Mau⁵⁰ (present Dimau to the east of the town of Sibsagar), but, to his disappointment, he found that place, too, subject to inundation and the earth full of clay. Yet he somehow dwelt there for six years and then advanced via Timak to Lang-Te-Pha where he built a town and set up his head-quarters. As that place was also not free from inundation he finally decided to choose a high ground to establish his capital. He searched for such a place and found the present Charaideo⁵¹ hill to the south-east of Simaluguri in the sub-division of Sibsagar more suitable than any other place so far. The Deodhai Asam Buranji says that in the year Mong-Keo King Hso-Ka-Hpa built his first capital on a permanent basis on a small hill including the high foot-hill area adjacent to that of Lang-Ku-Ri Deo.⁵² He there propitiated the gods, sacrificing one horse in the north and another in

48 Ghat is a foot-way to the river from the bank used for carrying water, washing, bathing etc.

49 Nam, water, deng, red or reddish i.e. A river of red-coloured water.

50 from Bodo dimau.

51 Tai Che-Rai-Doi, Assamised into Charaideo or Charai-khorong and Sanskritized into Bihagachal. Che, city, Rai, lost or dead, Doi, hill i.e. hill city of the dead, a part of the city being the burial ground of the kings and nobles.

52 God Lang-Ku-Ri is indentified with Siva.

the south, both being striped ones⁵³ according to some Buranjis. He also made an altar under a tree⁵⁴ and worshipped the gods Kham-Le, Rang-Le and Rang-Bang by offering a vesselful of silver. From his sources of information Dr. John Peter Wade writes that the inhabitants of this country presented Hso-Ka-Hpa with nine thousand tolas of gold and one hundred pieces of cotton cloth or Tao. Hso-Ka-Hpa also erected a fort at Charaideo.⁵⁵ The Chronicles say that Chao-Lung Hso-Ka-Hpa constructed the capital city of Charaideo in lakni Mong-Keo and ruled his kingdom from there for sixteen years and died in lakni Tao-Ngi. Thus from lakni Mong-Mao, when Hso-Ka-Hpa first set his foot on Tipam in the Upper Assam valley and made himself master of it, to lakni Tao-Ngi the total period of rule in Assam or Saumar-pith, as that region was called in the Tantras, was thirty-six years and not any other number as wrongly mentioned in some Buranjis. On this computation Hso-Ka-Hpa died at the age of seventy-seven years or in A.D. 1264. On this point both Dr. Wade and Sir Edward Gait differ between them and both are wrong when original Tai Buranjis are referred to.

Local Ruling Races in Hso-Ka-Hpa's Time :

Prior to the advent of Hso-Ka-Hpa the whole of Eastern Assam was under tribal rule. Almost all the tribes in

⁵³ Horse sacrifice by the early Tai-Ahoms is significant and comparable to similar sacrifices among certain early races including the Aryan rulers in India.

⁵⁴ mulberry tree according to Gait.

⁵⁵ Wade : An Account of Assam (North Lakhimpur, Assam, published by R. Sarma, 1927), 1800, p.18.

occupation of the various localities in the valley belonged to the Mongoloid Bodo race. A powerful section of this race, locally called Chutiya,⁵⁶ ruled the country east of the Sobansiri and Disang rivers, probably with a strip of territory upto the confluence of the Dihau and the Brahmaputra. The Chutiyas had their capital at Sadiya. In this connection it is important to refer to the Assamese Kachari Buranji which relates in a legendary fashion that one Manik of the Kachari tribe became the first king of the Sadiyal Kacharies and he owed his kingship to the talismanic power of a golden cat born of his wife from her union with an unknown Sannyasi. He was also told in a dream by that Sannyasi that the possession of that cat would bring him prosperity and raise him to kingship, and in due course the prophecy was fulfilled. Curiously enough, the Chutiyas have an identical tradition of a golden cat.

An account called Chutiyar Katha says that in A.D. 1189 there was a prince named Birpal of the family of Bhirmoka, an ancient king of the Chutika tribe, who ruled Sadiya, the country of the Korjokas. Some read Bhirmoka as Bhismaka. Birpal (or Birabar) became the Chief of sixty Chutiya families in the neighbourhood of the Sonagiri Hill and assumed the name of Gayapal. His wife Rupavati worshipped the god Kuvera for a son. Kuvera one day appeared in the form of Birpal and had an

⁵⁶ The real tribal name of this section of the Bodo race was probably Diora, whom the early Ahoms called Tiora or simply Ra. The term Diora seems to have been later Hinduised into Deori with a different meaning, that is, Deo or Spirit worshippers or priests who constitute the non-Hindu section of the tribe. The rest of the tribe was converted to Hinduism as noted.

intercourse with her, Kirpal was told in a dream all about it by Kuvera and was directed to go to a tree under which certain objects would be found. Accordingly he went and found under the tree a shield, a sword and a golden cat. In time a son was born to him and was named Gaurinarayan. He conquered all the Chutiyas in the neighbouring hills called Rangaligiri, Kalgiri, Dhavalgiri and Chandragiri with the help of these god-given weapons. He then became king over all assuming the title of Ratnadhvajpal. This is actually a legend of Vidarbha (Berar) according to which the Bhaja dynasty of that country succeeded Bhismaka's line. This tradition was grafted on the Kachari-Chutiya dynasty of Sadiya by priestly ingenuity with a slight modification at the time of first initiation of the ruling family into Hinduism. From this Sadiya became Vidarbha and the Chutiyas successors or descendants of Bhismaka, the great king of ancient Vidarbha.

It is also stated in the Kachari Buranji that the Sadiyal Kacharis established a kingdom in the easternmost part of Assam by subjugating the country from Sadiya in the east to Dikhou-mukh in the west and from the Dihing (the modern Dihang) in the north to Kenduguri on the bank of the Dilih river in the south. This is almost exactly the area over which the Chutiyas were ruling. Further the goddess called Kechaikhati, of which there is a temple at Ukumpura near Sadiya, was worshipped with human sacrifices both by the Kacharis and the Chutiyas. All these go to show that the Sadiyal Kacharis and the Chutiyas, if not the same tribe, are cognates belonging

to the common Bodo⁵⁷ race. Dr. B.S. Guha says that the Deori Chutiyas are a sub-tribe of the Kacharis.⁵⁸ He also points out that the Deori Chutiyas of Lakhimpur upto a comparatively late times offered human sacrifice at the Sadiya temple.⁵⁹ It is only the Deori Chutiyas who still preserve their old racial culture and forms of worship. The rest of the Chutiyas are now merged with the general Hindu society except a minor section. If the Chutiyas descended later from the northern hills and pushed the earlier Kachari rulers to the west of the Disang, then they must have seized the Golden Cat from the latter and preserved it until the conquest of their kingdom by the Ahoms. This part of the history requires further investigation for a definite conclusion.

To the west of the Dikhou another very powerful section of the Bodos, called in the Kachari Buranji Hedambial Kachari, was ruling with Dimapur on the bank of the Dhansiri as the capital. The term Hedambial has reference to the first Kachari king of legendary origin who is said to have been a descendant of the son born of a union of the second Pandava Bhima and Hidimba Raksasi. The inference seems to be that this legend of the dynastic link with Hidimba of the Indian epic

57 The word Bodo (or Boro) seems to come from the Tibetan word bod or pot meaning the land of snow, thereby meaning the country of Tibet. Thus the Bodos migrated originally from the Tibetan highlands into the plains of the great rivers of India. See Early Jesuit Travellers in Central Asia by C. Wessels, S.J. (The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff), 1924, p.99.

58 JAS, vol. XVII, 1951, pp.28-29.

59 Ibid, p.29; Endle, S : The Kacharis, pp.93-94.

was a priestly invention necessitated by the Kachari King's acceptance of Hinduism. The kingdom of the Herambial Kacharis extended from the Dikhan on the east to the Kallang, or beyond south of the Brahmaputra and included the valley of the Dhansiri and the tract of country constituting the North Cachar sub-division. These Kacharis call themselves not Kachari⁶⁰ but Dimasa, or more properly Dima-fisa, 'Sons of the great river', that is, the Dhansiri. The Tai-Ahoms called them Timasa, a Tai phonetic variation of Bodo Dimasa corresponding to Tiora from Bodo-Chutiya Diora. The Bodo name of the river Dhansiri is Dima which the Tai-Ahoms called Nam-Tima (River Tima).

The Dimasa king Hsarpatipha, said to be a son of the god Mahadev, was a contemporary of Hso-Ka-Hpa.⁶¹ His kingdom included Mahang⁶² in the east, but Hso-Ka-Hpa wrested that area by driving him into the hills.⁶³

In the neighbourhood of Charaideo were the Maran and Buragohainr and Barahi tribes. According to the Banbhoria/Buranji their total population was about four thousand and their country lay to the south of Shairing and north of the Kacharis. The Maran or Latak Chief Bedaucha and the Barahi Chief Thakuntha, whom

⁶⁰ Hickey (Tribes and Castes of Bengal) refers to a Limbu legend which says that the early habitat of the Koch, Mech and Dhimal tribes was the Khachar country, a name given by the Nepalese to the foot-hill region between the Brahmaputra and the Kosi rivers. Kachar in Assam may have taken its name from Khachar from its first settlement by Khachar tribes, who had spread over the Brahmaputra valley in the pre-historic period and later migrated to the present Kachar Hills quitting the Dhansiri valley under the Ahom pressure. These peoples were known by the collective name Kachari in Assam, though some of their sub-tribes have different names.

⁶¹ Assam Buranji - 'Swargenarayan Maharajar Janma Charitra, (DMAS), p.13.

⁶² To the east of Barhat and south of Jaipur.

Hso-Ka-Hpa 'had subjugated through friendship',⁶⁴ must have contributed their strength to the campaign against the Kacharis. It is said that the Marans and the Barahis first used the word Asam ('peerless') in referring to Hso-Ka-Hpa's race, from which the Tai kingdom in the Brahmaputra valley got its name. Though it may be a parallel development of the name of the country the real source seems to be the word Sam from Shan with the Bodo formation Asam (or Assam) meaning the country of the sams. The local tribes presented Hso-Ka-Hpa with local vegetables and certain edible roots to which the latter was not used. He therefore employed expert Barahi cooks (Chang-mai) for the purpose and the Barahi Chang-mai clan became famous from that time. Cooks for the Ahom nobles were also ~~appointed from~~ appointed from this clan.

To the west of the Chmtiyas on the north bank were the independent or semi-independent petty chiefs called Bhuiyas with their respective domains. They used probably to form loose confederacies among themselves for their defence when threatened with invasions by powerful external enemies. To the extreme west was the kingdom of Kamarupa, or Kamata of the later period, with the Karatoya as its western boundary. The capital of the kingdom of Kamata is, according to The Cooch Behar State (p. 91) ~~represented by the modern Gosanimari, lying on the banks of the Singimari, fourteen miles south of the town of Cooch Behar and only eight miles west of the railway station at Chawra Hat.~~ 'represented by modern Gosanimari, lying on the banks of the Singimari, fourteen miles south of the town of Cooch Behar and only eight miles west of the railway station at Chawra Hat'. Eminent authorities of Indian history point out that

64 Op.cit., p. 11.

the Ahoms, a section of the great Shan tribe, had appeared as a new element in the history of the Brahmaputra valley in the north-east early in the thirteenth century just as the Mughuls (Mongols) from the north-west appeared as a new element to the Indian population in the sixteenth, or three hundred years later.

2. Hao-Teu-Hpa (1264-81) :

Chao Hso-Ka-Hpa left behind three sons, Hso-Khang-Hpa, Hso-Teu-Hpa and another,⁶⁵ and of them Hso-Teu-Hpa succeeded to the throne. In his reign the Kacharis yielded to the Ahoms the remnants of their territories east of the Dikhan. Being worsted in a war with the Burmese, the king of Mong-Kawng, called also Nara-dea by the Assamese, appealed to Chao Hso-Teu-Hpa for assistance, but the latter was offended by the Shan king by refusing to comply with a request for a princess. Hso-Teu-Hpa sent an expedition against the Nara-dea under the command of his Bura Gohain. But the Ahom army was defeated and the Bura Gohain lost his life. At this another force was despatched with the Bar Gohain in command, but the latter preferred an amicable settlement which was accordingly made. The Bar Gohain was imprisoned for showing his weakness, but later released.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ Harakanta Sarma-Barua : Assam Buranji (DHAS), Ed. by Bhuyan, 1930, p.14.

⁶⁶ Gait : op.cit., p.79. The king of Mong-Kawng mentioned appears to be Chao-Hkun-Law according to N.Elias's Table of Mogaung Tsauwas.

The Narakas :

It may be noted that Nara is not a Tai word, nor is it known in Burma. Ney Elias thought that the Narakas were an aboriginal people with their early home in or about Khamti which was formerly a much bigger province divided into two districts called Ai-Kham in the north and Ai-Ton in the south, the present Sankring (Singkalin) Khamti being the western part of the old one.⁶⁷ In short, the independent Nara State was roughly co-extensive with Mong-Kawng (Mogaung State) of the Mao-Shans. There were undoubtedly scattered Tai settlements in the Nara country before its conquest by Sam-Long-Hpa, but with Shan supremacy the real Narakas gradually lost their identity. Pemberton says "The Shan Chieftain of Mogaung is also called the Nara Raja by the Singphos, and it appears that the term is also applied to the Shans".⁶⁸ This is also what we find in the Assamese Buranjis. Francis Hamilton's reference to the country of Nara also places that country on the east of the Tikliya Nagas, Manipur and its dependencies. Further, according to the same writer who investigated the subject, the Nara country belonged to the brother of the first Tai king (Khamtai) of Assam and that 'the language and customs of the people of Nara are the same with those which formerly prevailed among the proper Assamese', that is, the

⁶⁷ N. Elias : op.cit., p.39.

⁶⁸ Pemberton : op.cit., p.68.

Tai-Ahoms. He also found that between the two peoples there was still a friendly intercourse and many natives of Nara were always to be found at the King's Court at Jorhat.⁶⁹ It may be noted that Francis Hamilton was appointed in 1807 by the authorities of the Honourable East India Company to report on Assam and at that time the capital of the kingdom was at Jorhat.

The community called Nara in Assam is called by the Tai Man Nam⁷⁰ and the Man Nam are Tai. Another section of the Tai is called Man Noi⁷¹ meaning hill-dwellers. The Naras in Assam are mostly Buddhists. There are a few non-Buddhist Nara villages also and they are merged with the Ahoms. The Tai Naras are a cultured people and their special study is astronomy. King Gaurinath Singha's Commission to Mogaung consisted of Nara astronomers and other learned persons. It is these astronomers who worked out the chronology of the Ahom history.

3. Hso-Bin-Hpa (1281-93) :

Chao Hso-Ten-Hpa died in A.D. 1281 leaving four sons. Hso-Bin-Hpa, the eldest amongst them, ascended the throne. He made no addition to the territory of his father's kingdom. He died in A.D. 1293.

4. Hso-Khang-Hpa (1293-1332) :

Chao Hso-Bin-Hpa had two sons of whom Hso-Khang-Hpa succeeded him in A.D. 1293. It appears that in the initial

⁶⁹ F. Hamilton : An Account of Assam (Ed. by Bhuyan, DHAS.) 1940, pp.78-79.

⁷⁰ Man, village, Nam, water, river, river-side, hence river-side village dwellers.

stage the Ahom monarchs and their ministers devoted more attention to putting their small State on a firm foundation than to war and expansion and, for that purpose, avoided major conflicts with their powerful neighbours, such as the Chutiyas and the Kacharis, and took into their fold men of merits and calibre from among the local tribes. As the Tai were not strong in Mong-Dun-Hsun-Kham. Hso-Ka-Hpa's policy was to maintain active intercourse with the Shan country of Upper Burma and keep the road open for a flow of immigrants of his race from that country.⁷² Thus Chao Hso-Khang-Hpa became ruler of a State much stronger than in the beginning.

First Kamata War :

Chao Hso-Khang-Hpa's reign is noted for the first Kamata war which broke out probably after 1324 and continued for a number of years. Being exhausted the Raja of Kamata,⁷³ whose name remains unmentioned, sued for peace by offering his sister Rajani to the Ahom king in marriage. A treaty was made and the princess Rajani (Tai-Ahom Rajani) was brought to Hso-Khang-Hpa's palace. Some Assamese Buranjis⁷⁴ say Kamateswar made peace by offering two daughters, Rajani and Bhajani. Bhajani, the younger, had no son. Rajani had a son named Chao-Pu-Lai.⁷⁵ Actually princess

⁷² *Op.cit.*, p.12.

⁷³ K.L. Barua's Table of Kamata Kings with approximate dates shows that Raj (1285-1300), Singhadhvaj (1300-1305), Pratapadhvaj (1305-1325), Dharmanarayan (1325-1330), and Durlabharayan (1330-1350) were contemporaries of Chao Hso-Khang-Hpa. (see K.L. Barua's Early History of Kamarupa (Shillong), 1933, p.250. Of these Kamata Rajas one who was at war with the Ahoms cannot be definitely known for want of the necessary dates. Probably he was Dharmanarayana alias Dharmapala.

⁷⁴ *Op.cit.*, p.13. BBB, in DAB, p.96.

⁷⁵ mentioned as Tao-Hso-Lai in Assamese Buranjis.

Bhajani (Tai-Ahom Nangphra-Jini) was sent by a later Kamata king and was married to Chao Hso-Dang-Hpa. Hence the mention of Bhajani with Rajani is a mistake. Moreover nothing was there in the record to suggest that two princesses had to be offered at the same time to the same king. It is clearly stated in the Deodhai Asam Buranji that Rajani was the daughter of Sekhang and Bhajani that of Manik. Sekhang was probably the father of Dharmapala and Manik brother of Dharmapala and Rajani. Though Manik's name is missing in the extant genealogical table he probably became a ruler of Kamata during Hso-Dang-Hpa's reign.

Geit refers to one Buranji which says that the Sawbwa of Mong-Kawng (Mogang)⁷⁶ demanded tribute from Hso-Khang-Hpa on the ground of his being the lineal descendant of the king of Mao-Lung in whose reign Hso-Ka-Hpa had emigrated. The Ahom king refused to comply with the demand, but soon afterwards the Sawbwa died and the demand was never renewed.

Chao Hso-Khang-Hpa died in A.D. 1332 leaving four sons Hso-Khram-Hpa, Hso-To-Hpa, Tao-Kham-Thi and Chao-Pu-Lai.

5. Hso-Khram-Hpa (1332-64) :

Hso-Khram-Hpa, the eldest son, succeeded to the throne in A.D. 1332. He made his younger half-brother, Chao-Pu-Lai, Governor of Shairing,⁷⁷ called by the Assamese Saring Raja. The area of Shairing on the west of the Dikhou must have, in the meantime, been added to the Ahom kingdom by Chao Hso-Khram-Hpa, for which this new office of Governor was created for the first

⁷⁶ Contemporary Sawbwaa were Chau-Kun-law (1248-1308) and Chau-Pu-Reing (1308-44) of N. Elias's Table. The Sawbwa mentioned should be one of these.

⁷⁷ In the Tai text 'Kin-mong Shairing', not Chao-Hpa of Shairing.

time. But soon there were also the first signs of Court intrigues in the kingdom. Bargohain Ta-Phi-Khen and Chao-Pu-Lai entered into a conspiracy against the king. When the conspiracy was detected both fled to Kamata and persuaded Kamateswar, Durlabhnarayan, to invade the Ahom kingdom. Kamateswar marched with them and encamped at Athgaon. Then he advanced to Shairing where he made fortifications. When this news reached Chao Hso-Khram-Hpa, a messenger was sent to Ekun Kamta (Kamateswar) to ask the reason of his hostile advance to Shairing Nandang and demanded that the two traitors, Ta-Phi-Khen and Chao-Pu-Lai, under his shelter be surrendered. Chao-Pu-Lai, being informed of King's order, said 'I shall neither fight with the king nor go home'. This was an expression of his fear of death penalty and of being drawn into the conspiracy by the Bargohain. Though the Buranji is silent about Kamateswar's reply, it is clear that the Ahom King got back the two offenders and Kamateswar retired without attacking. The king forgave Chao-Pu-Lai, but ordered Ta-Phi-Khen, the real culprit, to be executed. But Ta-Phi-Khen made his escape and concealed himself until later he, too, was excused. Chao Hso-Khram-Hpa ruled for thirty-two years and died in A.D. 1364, just a century after Hso-Ka-Hpa's death, probably without leaving a son.

6. Hso-To-Hpa (1369-1376) :

There was an interregnum for five years, the State being under the management of the ministers. The nobles then invited Hso-To-Hpa, younger brother of Hso-Khram-Hpa, who was

in the village Lahanjing and placed him on the throne. Chao Hso-To-Hpa made his residence at Chapagurinagar. Thao-Phrang-Dam Buragohain and Ta-Phi-Ken Bargohain aided him in the conduct of affairs of the kingdom. After a long period of silence there arose frequent disputes with the Chutiyas over border and other problems during his reign. But the Chutiya king came to terms with Hso-To-Hpa and became his friend with a design. For on a well-planned day in A.D. 1376 he took the Ahom king into his royal barge professedly for a pleasure trip on the Saffrai river and treacherously murdered him in a helpless condition.

7. Tao-Kham-Thi (1380-1389) :

After the death of Hso-To-Hpa the country was in interregnum for four years for want of a suitable successor. During this period the affairs of the State were conducted by the ministers. In A.D. 1380 the choice fell on Tao-Kham-Thi, the third son of Hso-Khang-Hpa, who was then raised to the throne. He appointed Chao-Thai-Thum as Bura Gohain⁷⁸ and Tya-Tan-Bin as Bar Gohain.⁷⁹

He was determined to punish the Chutiya King for the treacherous murder of his brother, Hso-To-Hpa. Thus soon after his accession he marched with a strong force against the Chutiya King placing the elder of his two wives in charge during his absence, but the Chutiya king fled into the hills and he returned victorious to the capital. In the meantime, the elder wife, being

⁷⁸ In Tai Chao-Phrang-Mong.

⁷⁹ In Tai Chao-Thao-Lung or Thao-Mong-Lung.

envious of the younger one, ordered her execution on a false charge, but the Bura Gohein had pity on her as she was pregnant and managed secretly to set her adrift on the Dihing on a raft. At Habung down on the opposite bank of the Brahmaputra she was rescued by a Brahmin and given shelter in his house. In due course the lady gave birth to a son and after some time died. The young prince was affectionately brought up by the Brahmin with his own children. At the capital all the joys of victory vanished when the king learnt upon enquiry the misdeeds of the queen, particularly the tragedy of his beloved younger wife. But with all this the king was so much under the influence of the elder queen that he failed to prevent her from continuing to commit acts of oppression. The indignation of the nobles rose to such a pitch at the inaction of the king that he was dethroned in A.D. 1389 and assassinated not sparing the queen.⁸⁰

8. Hso-Dang-Hpa (1398-1407) :

Tao-Kham-Thi seems to have left no son by his elder queen. Hence after he was deposed the administration of the country was assumed by the Council of ministers and run for nine years. Chao-Pu-Lai's claim to the throne, however legitimate, was not considered probably because of his past records. Meanwhile one Thao-Hso-Khen, who had gone to Habung in connection with his cattle trade, happened to meet a young man, who, from appearance, seemed to be of royal origin. He learnt that

80 T.P. : op.cit., 14-15 ; BBB, op.cit., p.96.

he was the son of Tao-Kham-Thi by the younger wife. Returning from Habung he reported the matter to the Dangarias (ministers) who, after discussion, brought the prince and placed him on the throne. He assumed the title of Hso-Dang-Hpa. He was then fifteen years of age. He was so much attached to the Brahmin family that he had brought with him the old Brahmin and the members of his family to the capital. An Assamese Buranji adds that he looked upon the sons of the Brahmin, who were seven, as his own brothers and therefore he gave them the status of princes and settled them at Dihing granting probably princely estates with elephants and horses.⁸¹ Hence these sons of the Habung Brahmin including prince Hso-Dang-Hpa are referred to by the Assamese Hindus as 'Bamuni Konwar'. It is also believed that the Brahmin acted as the confidential adviser of the king.⁸² With the Brahmin came also his Lakshmi-Narayan Salagram into the palace.⁸³ For the first time Brahminical religion and rites found an honoured place and patronage under this king.

Capital At Charagua (Dihing) :

He transferred his capital to Charagua up the river Dhola and near the Dihing. He is the first monarch who is known to have built what is called Singari-Ghar or Coronation Hall with a high floor at Charagua and ascended it. It is beautifully constructed with planks made of a kind of timber locally called Singari from which it derives its name. Probably this hall was just what is called in Tai-Ahom 'Hang-ren', a house with a

81 T.P. : op.cit., p.15, BBB, op.cit., p.97.

82 Gait : op.cit., p.83.

83 T.P. : Ibid. n.15.

raised planked platform called in Assamese 'Pat-Ghar'. It is decorated with the best materials. On the appointed day the King with his chief queen, wearing the royal coronation robes, insignia and ornaments, ascends the Singari-Ghar with all the pomp and grandeur and sits on the throne placed in it surrounded by the officers and nobles of the Court, the royal priests called Deodhais and Bailongs performing the installation ceremony. The King and queen then give rewards to all according to rank and precedence. It is the custom for the kings to issue royal coins or mohars in their names only after completing the ceremony of ascending the Singari-Ghar, although it is not always strictly observed.

Nora War :

As there was no son and successor of Tao-Kham-Thi and his younger wife was taken to have been executed by the order of the elder queen, the Shairing Raja Chao-Pu-Lai (or Tao-Hso-Lai), the youngest son of Chao Hso-Khang-Hpa naturally expected to succeed to the throne after his brother Tao-Kham-Thi, but the ministers did not trust him for his past actions and had therefore to assume to themselves all functions of government. Being deprived of his right to succession Chao-Pu-Lai left for Mong-Kawng (Mogaung), the capital of the Nora kingdom and reported to the Nora Raja or Mong-Kawng Sawbwa Chau-Hung-Hpa (1381-1411)⁸⁴ that there was no king of his (Nora King's) family in Mong-Dun.

⁸⁴ Ney Elias's Chau-Hung-Hpa is actually Hso-Hung-Hpa or Hso-Hun-Hpa in Shan and Hso-Run-Hpa in Tai-Ahom in which 'R' often stands for Shan 'H'. See also T.P. : op.cit., p.15.

Hsun-Kham and that all powers had been usurped by the ministers.⁸⁵ He probably requested help to win the throne for himself as the next legitimate heir to rule as a vassal of Mong-Kawng. The Mong-Kawng Sawbwa then sent an expedition under the command of Ta-Hsin-Pau⁸⁶ to annex Assam. The Shan general encamped near Kuhlirbari at Tipam. By that time Hso-Dang-Hpa had already ascended the throne and ruled for nearly three years. When the news of the Mong-Kawng army's advance was reported to him, he marched on an elephant, named Pairin, against the enemy and his general Ta-Chan-Bing Bor-Gohain on a horse advanced with his army. A battle was fought at Kuhlirbari and the invaders were worsted and forced to retreat and come to terms. Chao-Hpa Hso-Dang was slightly wounded by an enemy spear. A treaty was then concluded in A.D. 1401 (Sak 1323) between the two generals by which the Patkai was fixed as the boundary between the two countries, Mong-Dun-Hsun-Kham and Mong-Kawng. The treaty was solemnly adopted by both the generals dipping their hands into the waters of the hill stream called Nong-Yang⁸⁷ and sacrificing fowls on the spot. They then departed as friends to their respective capitals after engraving their figures upon the rock which was to demarcate the boundary so fixed.⁸⁸ From that time onwards the hills called Doi-Kao-Rang by Chao

⁸⁵ H.S.B. : op.cit., p.17.

⁸⁶ or appears to be same as Tao-Hsin-Pau. He is said to be the Bar-Gohain (minister) of the Sawbwa in Tamuli Phukan's Buranji.

⁸⁷ Gait says that the Nong-Yang lake into which the stream of the same name falls in the neighbourhood is twenty-eight miles south-west of Margherita. (Gait; op.cit., p.83).

⁸⁸ The expression is Patkai-Shengkan i.e. took oath by sacrificing fowls. See T.P. : op.cit., pp.16-17.

Hso-Ka-Hpa became famous as Patkai or mountain of fowl sacrifice.

Revolt of the Tai-Tipam :

Soon after Hso-Dang-Hpa's formal accession at Charagua the Tai-Tipam community (Tipamiyas) rose in revolt. The cause of the revolt is not clear. L.W. Shakespear in his History of Upper Assam etc. says that the change of capital from Charaideo to Charagua brought about hostilities with the Tipam tribe, whose lands they (the Ahoms) now occupied. The aborigines of Tipam were probably Kachins. But when Hso-Ka-Hpa came a Tai settlement was also formed there and since then the local governors of Tipam had been from among the Tai princes or nobles.

The king captured many of the rebel leaders at a deliberately planned feast in which a white buffalo was killed and beheaded them. The revolt then subsided. The heads of the rebels were exhibited as a trophy by placing them on a large slab of stone in the form of a garland at Tipam. The Banpha (or Banphera) Nagas, who created trouble, were also suppressed after killing their leaders.

Chao Hso-Dang-Hpa had married Chao Nang-Hseng, the daughter of a Tipam Hkun-Tai named Tao-Blek-Hseng and made her queen. Earlier when she was at her parents' home she had, in all probability, illicit connection with the Chief of Tipam, Ta-Hso-Lai, and at the time of her marriage the latter presented her with two gold chains.⁸⁹

⁸⁹ The Ancient Chronicles of Assam (K.H.S., Gauhati),

Later one day while Chao Hso-Dang-Hpa was dining with Ta-Hso-Lai, his queen Chao Nang-Hseng cast a glance at the latter. Shortly after this Chao Ta-Hso-Lai presented the queen with a ring set with precious stones through a Likchau (attendant). The king received a report of all these secret amours, but desisted from taking any immediate action. But apprehending danger Tao-Blak-Hseng escaped to Mong-Kawng. Soon Chao Ta-Hso-Lai and his associate Tamera also fled to Mong-Kawng and sought the protection of the Sawbwa of that country.

Conflict With Kamata :

When the Nora expedition against Mong-Dun-Hsun-Kham ended with a treaty and friendship between the two countries the rebel chiefs Chao-Pu-Lai,⁹⁰ the Tipam Chief and Tao-Blak-Hseng⁹¹ became helpless and fled to Kamata for assistance. Grand old queen Rajani, daughter of the former Kamata king and sister of the then reigning one, being aware of the intention of her son Chao-Pu-Lai and apprehending trouble from that kingdom, sent one Eupai Laskar to her brother, the king of Kamata, to convey to him her request not to quarrel with the Ahom king and destroy the good relations subsisting between the two countries since the time of her marriage. She also suggested in her message that the friendship should be further

90 A confusion is noticed in the Buranjis, both Assamese and Tai-Ahom, about the two chiefs Chao-Pu-Lai and Tao-Hso-Lai. Here the prince who fled to Kamata should, in all probability, be Chao-Pu-Lai, a relation of the Kamata Raja and not Tao-Hso-Lai who has apparently no relation with that king Raja and who according to Lai-Tu Buranji came from the Lao country.

91 This is the only name mentioned in AB, (p.49), who fled to Nora in consequence of the Tai-Tipam rebellion and probably joined Chao-Pu-Lai against the Ahom King.

consolidated for future good by an offer of another princess.⁹² But the Kamata Raja⁹³ first refused to comply with her wise advice and to extradite the rebel princes as demanded by the Ahom king. The Ahom authorities took a serious view of this unexpected attitude of the Kamata rulers who were supposed to be friendly. An expedition was then prepared under the command of the Bar-Gohain, General Tachan-bing, for the invasion of Kamata.⁹⁴ At this crucial moment Kamata was attacked by the Muslims from Bengal, then under Ghiyas-ud-din A'zam (1393-1410), the son of Sikandar Shah and correspondent of the celebrated poet Hafiz. In this situation the Raja of Kamata quickly submitted to Hso-Dang-Hpa and sought his assistance against the invading Muslims. He also wished to offer his daughter, princess Bhajani, to him to confirm their former friendship. Hso-Dang-Hpa then despatched a force under the command of General Ta-Chan-Bing to the aid of Kamata with instructions to bring the princess if offered.⁹⁵ The allied forces then fought and drove off the Muslims across the Karatoya, the western boundary of the Kamata kingdom.⁹⁶ The Raja then gratefully offered his daughter Bhajani in marriage to the Ahom monarch with a dowry consisting of elephants, horses, gold and silver and a number of attendants

⁹² DAB, pp. 11-12.

⁹³ appears to be Manik, Rajani's brother from the contents of Rajani's message to the Kamata Raja whom she addressed as brother. Bhajani was king Manik's daughter.

⁹⁴ According to G. Barua's translated Ahom Buranji the expedition was already sent and Gait takes it as such, but the statement appears to suffer from a lacuna and hence defective. Deodhai Asam Buranji fills a part of the lacuna and suggests that a proposal for peace and alliance had already come from the Kamata Raja before the march of the expedition.

⁹⁵ DAB, p. 12.

and servants both male and female.⁹⁷

question of The Eastern Dependencies :

It may be recalled that Hso-Ka-Hpa, during his march from Upper Burma to Assam, conquered the region from Kham-Jang to Tipam, both inclusive along the route and appointed governors to manage and control the different parts of it and to collect annual tributes from the local inhabitants. This arrangement continued, with occasional interruptions, for over one hundred and seventy years. But during Hso-Dang-Hpa's reign the Tai-Tipam (Tipamiyas), whose Chief was a brother or a cousin of the Mong-Kawng Sawbwa, revolted and, it is presumed, at their instigation the inhabitants of Mong-Kham-Jang, Mong-Ai-Ton and Mong-Tipam stopped payment of tributes for eight years, neither did they transfer their allegiance to Mong-Kawng. Thus they virtually asserted their independence. Hso-Dang-Hpa, lest there be a misunderstanding on the part of the friendly Mong-Kawng Sawbwa Hso-Run-Hpa, sent his envoy Tapangnau to him with a letter stating the attitude of the above subject peoples and reiterating his claim over those territories. 'I wish, therefore,' he wrote, 'to destroy these countries which are in a rebellious spirit'.⁹⁸ Being so informed Hso-Run-Hpa⁹⁹ sent Chao-Luban to the Tipam Chief, whom he addressed as brother, with instructions to pay tributes to the 'King of Mong-Dan-

⁹⁷ AB, p. 51.

⁹⁸ AB, p. 51. Gait thinks these peoples received encouragement from the Nora Raja in their refusal to pay tributes, but there is no proof of it.

Hsun-Kham'. To the Ahom king he sent with Tapangmau a number of presents¹⁰⁰ with a reply containing his instructions to the Tipam Chief, a step probably sufficient to make all others pay tributes as before. But unfortunately Chao Hso-Dang-Hpa died in A.D. 1407 before the arrival of his envoy from Mong-Kawng.

9. Hso-Jang-Hpa (1407-1422) :

Chao Hso-Dang-Hpa had three sons of whom Hso-Jang became king in A.D. 1407. He appointed Khenpong and Nang-Hso-Kham Bura-Gohain and Bar-Gohain respectively. Nothing more is known about his reign from the available records. He died in A.D. 1422 leaving behind four sons.

10. Hso-Phak-Hpa (1422-1439) :

One of his sons Hso-Phak-Hpa succeeded to the throne in A.D. 1422 and ruled for seventeen years. He married the daughter of a great man of Tipam named Chao Nang-Jey-Kang. She was the mother of Hso-Hsen who succeeded Chao Hso-Phak-Hpa when the latter died in A.D. 1439. During his reign Khenpong continued to be the Bura-Gohain, but the Bar-Gohain appointed was Lang-Nim. The king left behind two sons.

11. Hso-Hsen-Hpa (1439-1488) :

Hso-Hsen-Hpa ascended the throne in A.D. 1439. The ministers of his father, Khen-Pong and Lang-Nim, continued to hold their respective offices. In his reign the Nagas of the Tongshu (or Tengsa) village in the Central Naga Hills committed raids. The king himself marched against them with a

100 Presents mentioned were 'a white horse, a Tangkak

force.¹⁰¹ The Nagas then made a plan to overpower the king's men by a show of surrender to be followed by a sudden attack. Accordingly they had hidden their weapons in the forest close to the king's camp and sent some of them to the king. The group that approached the king made a pretence of submission to his Majesty by surrendering three Nakoi das¹⁰² and promised to remain loyal by the customary way of dipping their hands into water. But while the king was so engaged, the main body of the Nagas took up their hidden weapons and made a sudden attack upon the king's men for which the latter were not prepared and killed as many as one hundred and forty of them including the Banrukia Gohain and Parbatia Hazarika.¹⁰³ Yet it did not take long for the king and his son by a vigorous counter-attack to defeat the Nagas, occupy their village and compel them to submit.¹⁰⁴

In A.D. 1480 Hso-Hsen-Hpa rebuilt the Nagasankara Temple on the north bank of the Brahmaputra.¹⁰⁵ It was erected in the last quarter of the fourth century A.D. by a king named Nagasankara, who is said to have come from the valley of the Karatoya river and established his capital at Pratapgarn near Biswanath in the Darrang District in Assam.¹⁰⁶ The first king of the Chutiyas in Sadiya, whose descendants consolidated the

101 AB, p.52.

102 A kind of weapon or dah to cut with used by the Nagas.

103 DAB, p.13 ; AB, p.52.

104 AB, p.52. Gait refers to another account which says that the King fled, but the Banrukia Gohain took command and defeated the Nagas. But the account is not specifically mentioned.

105 H.S.B. : op.cit., p.21.

106 The Gooch Behar State by H.N.Chowdhury. pp.217-18.

Chutiya power, is thought to be an officer of the Court of Pratapgarh, who, on the downfall of the Pratapgarh line, founded to the east a kingdom of his own. Further the assumption of the title 'Pala' by the Chutiya kings coupled with the Chutiya traditions about the founder of the dynasty of kings of the Chutiyas suggests some sort of a link with the western Palas. This was probably a later development of the Chutiya rule. But there is little doubt that the Chutiyas came under the western Hindu influence at an early date as shown by the Hinduised legends about the origins of the ruling dynasties of their country. Hso-Hsen-Hpa died in the summer of A.D. 1488 after a long and comparatively peaceful reign of forty-nine years.

12. Hso-Han-Hpa (1488-1493) :

On the death of Hso-Hsen-Hpa his son Hso-Han-Hpa succeeded to the throne in A.D. 1488. Chao-Kang-Ban-Ruk was appointed Bar-Gohain and Khenpong continued in the office of Bura-Gohain. The king constructed a fort at Tangshu and stationed a garrison there under an officer named Khu-Nang-Hseng to control the Nagas of that area.

War With The Dimasa Kacharis :

In A.D. 1490 the Dimasa (Timisa) Kacharis attacked the Ahom territory. Chao Hso-Han-Hpa despatched a force under the command of General Kham-Peng who proceeded mounting the famous war elephant Pairen. Khu-Nang-Hseng was appointed war

Neog.¹⁰⁷ They crossed the Dikhau river and waited for the enemy beyond Tangshu. The Kacharis suddenly appeared and attacked the king's army and overwhelmed it killing one hundred and twenty soldiers. Kham-Peng made a hasty retreat but Tangshu Neog was overtaken and killed. The army fell back to Tangshu. The king made peace with the Kacharis by offering a girl, named Jekhring,¹⁰⁸ to the Kachari Raja. Without further pressure the Kacharis then returned home. According to another account¹⁰⁹ there was no victory for any side. Both sides then preferred coming to terms and the king made friendship with the Kacharis by offering a girl to their Raja.

The Tangshu Nagas again raided the Ahom territory and Bar-Gohain Chao Kang-Ban-Ruk was sent with a force to subjugate them. The Bar-Gohain was killed in the fight and his head was cut off and carried away by the Nagas. Chao Nang-Rang was then appointed Bar-Gohain and put in command of the expedition sent against the Nagas. Nang-Rang defeated the Nagas killing many of them and occupied their village. He then brought to the capital three Nagas, Tangshu, Nephera and Maupiya with their families as hostages.¹¹⁰

One Tairuban of a Hkun-Tai family, a petty officer in charge of the royal paddy-field, was charged for theft of paddy belonging to the king. He was arrested and fined one

107 Tai Neu shek (neu, finger, shek, war).

108 Langji in DAB probably from Nang-Jekhring in AB.

109 T.P. op.cit., p.18.

110 H.S.B. op.cit., p.21.

hundred silver coins.¹¹¹ Later the same person was allowed to enter the palace with the permission of the Bura-Gohain Khenpong to do some clearing work in the upper chamber (meshang) occupied by the king. This revengeful man suddenly attacked the king at an unguarded moment and pierced him to death with a spear which he had brought concealed inside a bamboo piece and escaped.¹¹² Hso-Han-Hpa ruled only for five years.

13. Hso-Pem-Hpa (1493-1497) :

Hso-Han-Hpa's son Hso-Pem-Hpa then succeeded to the throne in A.D. 1493. His first act was to capture Tairuban, the murderer of his father and execute him. The family members and other relations of Tairuban were then ejected from the neighbourhood of the capital and settled at Daria. The king also charged the Bura-Gohain Khenpong with complicity and dismissed him from office. General Chao Phun-Long-Kham-peng was appointed Bura-Gohain in his place.

A youthful Naga Chief (Hkunbao¹¹³) of handsome appearance came to pay usual homage to Chao Hso-Pem-Hpa. One of the Chamua queens,¹¹⁴ who saw him from inside, appreciated his handsome figure before the king when the latter went into the apartment. This offended the king who thought himself less

111 In Assamese Buranjis Tairuban is variously called Tai-Turungban, Lan-Turban Ahom etc. The amount fined is also different in different Buranjis, such as 'one seer of silver', 'one hundred rupees', 'four rupees' etc.

112 H.S.B. : op.cit., p.21.

113 Hkun, prince, bao, youngman.

114 Chamua queens were married from the ranks of a class called Chamua which is below the ranks of the nobles and above those of the labour class. Such a queen could not become a the chief queen.

handsome in her eye. She was then pregnant. But yet the king presented this queen to the Naga Chief who could not reject. In due course a child was born in the house of the Naga Chief in his hill village.¹¹⁵ Chao Hso-Pem-Hpa died in the year A.D. 1497.

14. Hso-Hum-Mong (1497-1539) :

On the death of Chao Hso-Pem-Hpa his son Hso-Hum-Mong or Hso-Hum-Hpa succeeded to the throne in A.D. 1497 by ascending the Singari Ghar in the capital city of Charagua on the bank of the Dihing. As he was the king from the Dihingia royal House (Phoid) he was also called Dihingia Raja by the local people. He erected an embankment along the Dihing for the protection of the capital and the areas on that side from the annual floods. By the time of Hso-Hum-Mong's accession Brahminical influence considerably increased in the Ahom Court and the country and the Brahminical title of Svarga Narayan, a variant of Svarga Dev, was conferred on the king and, as Gait points out, this new designation was henceforth used by the Ahom Kings in their official documents. Hso-Hum-Mong was also the first Ahom king to use Saka era in the official calendar. According to a Hindu version Sri Sri Svarganarayan-deva Janmakatha the first Svarganarayana, said to be the ancestor of the Ahom kings, was of the Mleccha origin being born in A.D. 1119 (sak 1041) of a clandestine union of the

115 T.P. : op.cit., p.21.

god Indra in his Mleccha life under the curse of Vasistha with the heavenly damsel Syama as wife of the Nara Raja Chengtam. This is how the Ahom kings are said to be descended from Indra, a version foreign to the Tai-Ahom Chroniclers and obviously absurd in the form in which it is presented, it being the first step towards conversion of the race to the new faith.

Hso-Hum-Mong settled the princes, descended from the former kings, with estates or demesnes according to clans in the districts of Dihing, Shairing (Saring), Tipam, Tungkhung and Namrup. From this arrangement there arose five Royal Houses called Dihingia, Saringia, Tipamiya, Tungkhungia and Namrupia¹¹⁶ and the successors to the throne were chosen according to talents and capacity from among these Houses. Each of these districts was made into a subordinate principality under a Governor called Raja who was invariably a prince of the ruling family where such princes were there. Thus Hso-Hum-Mong appointed his eldest son Hso-Klen-Mong as Raja of Tipam, second son Hso-Leng (called also Deo-Raja) as Raja of Shairing and the third son Hso-Teng^{as} Raja of Namrup. The fourth son Hso-Khring remained without any estate.¹¹⁷

The king had in his reign Phun-Long-Kham-peng, Thao-Mong-Chang-Rai and Thao-Mong-Nang-Dhu-Pu-Ra as Bura-Gohains successively and Phra-Shen-Mong, his uncle Ka-Li-Kham and his son Ton-Kham as Bar-Gohains. Phra-Shen-Mong was made Rajmantri.

116 H.S.B. : op.cit.; DAB, p.15.

117 DAB, p.15.

The three Ministers were of equal status. As described in the Rajmantri simply goes Tamuli Phukan's Burenji/first among the Ministers and has under him one thousand men called Jakaisukias. Except for this there is no difference in position with his other two colleagues. Hso-Hum-Mong also created an office of a third Minister called Barpatra-Gohain for Kan-Seng, a name given by the king to the son of Hso-Pem-Hpa, who, on his mother being presented to the Naga Hkunbao, was born in the latter's house in the Gabharu Hill and whose identity was now revealed to the king. According to another version Kan-Seng was the son of Seng-Kan, the latter being the son of the Hkunbao of the Banpha Nagas named Karengpa by the queen who had been presented by Hso-Hum-Mong of whom the Naga was a fast friend. It may be noted that the Bar-Gohain, Bura-Gohain and Barpatra-Gohain are equal in status. To the Barpatra-Gohain were allotted the Barahis, Chutiya and Marans as subjects.

Husain Shah's Invasion :

At this time Ala-ud-din Husain Shah, an Arab ruler of Bengal from A.D. 1493 to 1518, who reconquered Magadha and brought under his sway territories touching the frontiers of Orissa, turned his arms to the east and conquered Kamata-Kamarupa in A.D. 1498 killing in the war its king Harup Narayan (or Rup Narayan). He then invaded the Ahom kingdom with initial success. The reference to this Muslim invasion in "Buchanan Manuscripts" says that the Ahom king (Hso-Hum-Mong)

eventually 'destroyed the whole invading army, who were all either killed or made prisoners'. But there is no reference in the extant Ahom history to any such war of the Ahoms with Husain Shah in A.D. 1498. The only earliest war of importance with the Muslims of Bengal was that of A.D. 1532-34 when Turbak Khan invaded the Ahom territory.

Revolt of The Itons and The Kham-Yangs :

The Itons and the Kham-Yangs, tributary to the Ahoms since the time of Hso-Ka-Hpa, once again rebelled in A.D. 1504 and the king sent an expedition against them under the command of Nang-Rang Bar-Gohain and Kham-Peng Bura-Gohain. The rebels submitted after a fight and made peace by offering a girl and four elephants and agreed to pay annual homage to the king with offer of large gongs, amber and Nara dahs. It appears the Gohains were in the Iton-Kham-Yang country for six years setting up the administration for control and collection of tributes, for they returned to the capital only in the year 1510.

Panbari Expedition :

In A.D. 1512 king Hso-Hum-Hpa had to lead an expedition into the Habung country probably to put down a revolt of the Bhuyans or petty feudal chiefs in the western district called Panbari.¹¹⁸ He returned after restoring order. Though

¹¹⁸ AB, p.54 ; ACA, p.51 ; Wado : op.cit., p.22.

the extant records are not very clear about the expansion of the Ahom territories on the north bank of the Brahmaputra up to this time, yet they indicate by referring to Hso-Ka-Hpa's occupation of the eastern part of the Habung country and Hso-Hsen-Hpa's construction of the temple of Nagasankara that large areas there had already come under the control of the Ahoms.

Conquest of the Chutiya Country :

The first clash with the Chutiyas in the reign of Hso-Hum-Mong arose from a boundary dispute. The boundary between the Ahom and Chutiya territories was fixed along the midstream of the Dihing. One day a barali fish was coming adrift along the midstream and the Ahoms, who saw it, chased it with a boat and caught it. The Chutiyas rushed at the Ahoms to seize the fish from their hands alleging that it had been illegally caught by them from the part of the river within the Chutiya territory. There was a scuffle on the boat for the fish in which the Chutiyas were overpowered and two of their men with the fish were taken away by the Ahoms.¹¹⁹

The incident was reported to the Chutiya king Dhirnarayan and the latter determined to attack the Ahoms. He proceeded with a force and arrived at Dikhaumukh in A.D. 1513. When Hso-Hum-Hpa received this report he despatched a naval force against him with Hso-Khring, Hso-Chang and two Railung Gohains in command of its different units. A land

119 AB, - 'SMJC' pp. 9-10.

force was also ordered by the king to advance to the attack and the king himself moved in person and conducted the operations from a strong base. A pitched battle was fought near a lake called Nong-Kang-Mong in which a large number of the enemies fell and the rest took to flight.¹²⁰ The king then returned victorious to the capital.

In A.D. 1520 the Chutiyas made a second invasion of the Ahom kingdom.¹²¹ The Chutiya king Dhirnarayan (Dhit-naran of the Tai-Ahom text) this time carefully cut his way through the wilds and arrived at Cheruakata from where he, with his minister Kachitarā, advanced to Dikhaumukh and attacked the Ahoms and plundered the local people. The Ahom forces then launched a counter-attack on the Chutiyas both from land and water and the latter had to withdraw to Dihingmukh. Dhirnarayan attempted to take the Ahom fort at Dihingmukh which was in charge of General Khen-Mong. Instead of fighting from inside the strong defences of the fort Khen-Mong rushed out of it with some of his men and charged the Chutiyas, but was killed in the action.¹²² Khen-Mong's men were then compelled to retreat and the news was communicated by the Bar-Gohain to the king who was at Nangkamong.¹²³ The Chutiyas

¹²⁰ DAB, p.15 ; AB, p.54.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² ACA, p.51. In it Khen-Mong is mentioned as Eo-Mong.

¹²³ AB, p.54.

made a war base at Sessamukh. The Ahom king collected a large army and sent generals Phra-Shen-Mong Bar-Gohain and Chao Kling-long with an army up the Brahmaputra to Dibrumukh where they were asked to build a fort.¹²⁴ This was a manoeuvre to encircle Dhirnarayan. The king himself marched to Dihingmukh with a strong force. Dhirnarayan retreated before the Ahom force and reached the neighbourhood of the mouth of the Dibru river. He encamped at Rupa and sent a detachment to lay siege to the Ahom fort at Dibrumukh.¹²⁵ After five days' fighting to capture the fort the Chutiyas suffered defeat and fled to Sadiya. The Chutiyas lost 5000 men of whom 1000 were captured and slaughtered by the Ahoms.¹²⁶

Meantime Chaopha¹²⁷ Hso-Hum had come to the big town¹²⁸ and offered sacrifices to the gods. Thereafter he collected a large army and marched to Sessamukh. The Chutiya Raja was pursued to Sadiya by the reputed Ahom generals Bar-Gohain Phra-Shen-Mong, Char-Handhikoi Kan-Seng and Kling-Long Rajmantri, (probably Phun-Long Bura-Gohain). Chutiya Raja tried to take his stand at Larupara, but the Ahom king by a rapid march throughout the night appeared at Larupara next morning. The Chutiya Raja retreated to Kang-Kham, but Hso-Hum-Hpa pursued him with his army and navy. The Chutiya Raja found himself in an irretrievable

¹²⁴ AB, p. 55.

¹²⁵ AB, *ibid.* According to some Buranjis the Chutiyas encamped at Ladpara.

¹²⁶ AB, - 'SMJC' : p. 10.

¹²⁷ meaning 'heavenly king' literally : The Brahminical version derived from it is Svarga-dev or Svarga-narayan. In the Assamese Buranjis the Ahom king is always referred to as Svarga-deo.

¹²⁸ said to be Charaideo, though the word is 'town' and not Charaideo in the text.

position and opened negotiations for peace and sent valuable presents to the Ahom king and the Ahom generals. He agreed to remain as tributary to the Ahoms promising to pay in future annual tributes in return for the protection given.¹²⁹ The envoy, who had been sent by the Chutiya Raja with this peace proposal and presents, was sent back by Hso-Hum-Mong to inform the Raja that if peace was wanted he should hand over in addition the golden cat, the golden parasol, the golden sceptre, the golden couch and a princess. The above insignia of sovereignty and a princess were asked for probably to test the genuineness of the peace proposal. When the envoy intimated the demand to the Chutiya king, the latter adopted a delaying tactics by sending fresh presents with a princess other than the precious ancestral articles and praying for peace, but at the same time raising a fort at the mouth of the river and concentrating troops there obviously for war. Another account indicates that these fortifications were raised around the capital city of Sadiya at the mouth of the great river called Lohit.¹³⁰ With the princess was sent a knife concealed inside the fold of a mat, which was taken as a further proof of the Chutiya king's signal for war. Hso-Hum-Mong then had a consultation with his generals and ministers. They could all see through the plan of the Chutiyas and decided immediately to attack them without further negotiation. Hso-Hum-Mong, directing his

¹²⁹ DAB, p. 16.

¹³⁰ AE, - 'SMJC' : p. 11.

navy to attack the enemy, himself advanced on a black horse with his army and stormed the above fortifications of the enemies and captured the city in A.D. 1522 in the month of Pausa (Dec.-Jan.). After a day's stay here the Ahom force made a hot pursuit of the fleeing Chutiya Raja as far as the Kaitara Hill but could not overtake him. The Raja with two hundred men next climbed the hill Chandan-giri (Chantan of the Tai) in the interior. Leaving General Kan-Seng in charge of Sadiya General Ton-Kham, son of Phra-Shen-Mong Bar-Gohain, pursued the Raja with a strong force and attacked him in his hill refuge. His force began to climb up Chandan-giri but the Chutiyas rolled down big blocks of stones and also pelted showers of stones from the hill tops. The Ahoms were forced to retreat with a loss of hundred men in the struggle to climb up the hill. The Ahom Generals then held a Council and decided on a three-pronged attack. General Wang-Hsung and General Kling-Kham moved to attack from the front, General Shenba from the left flank and General Ban-Long from the right flank.¹³¹ One officer named Chao-Hseng-Rupak (Saikia) proceeded on an elephant called Aikhring to the left and reached an unguarded side of the hill. He there climbed up a Ghila creeper (Entada scandens) followed by thirty of his men and reached the top of

¹³¹ The strategy of this attack is described differently in different accounts, but the one given in DAB appears to be more reliable as it is corroborated in part by others.

the hill and after close observation sighted the Chutiya king and about forty people at a place called Barduar.¹³² He with his small force advanced to the attack, but was soon repulsed by the Chutiya archers who came out in larger numbers and fought fiercely killing most of his men. Jang-Mong-Khang Hatibarua, who had witnessed the defeat of the Ahoms, expeditiously climbed up the hill with two thousand men and delivered a powerful assault on the Chutiyas who had, as a result, to flee in disorder. Jang-Mong-Khang captured the Chutiya Raja in his flight by giving him a mortal thrust with his spear. The Raja's son was also killed by the same hand. He then brought their heads and placed them before his Generals. Soon after, the head of the queen was also brought in by one Ai-Khang-Hkun.¹³³ Other members of the royal family were searched out on the hill and brought to the Ahom camp.

According to short Chronicles entitled Chutiyar Katha the Raja Dhirnarayan alias Khunta Raja, unable to find a suitable groom for his beautiful daughter, Sadhani alias Dekhani, promised to give her away in marriage to any body, high or low-born, who would be the first to hit with an arrow a target, a squirrel, on a tree in front of his Court next morning. A Chutiya young man, who used to supply wood fuel and

¹³² DAB, p.17 ; AB, p.56 ; ACA, p.54.

¹³³ According to BBB it was Chao-Hseng who killed the Chutiya Raja with his spear. Jang-Mong-Hatibarua brought the heads of the Raja's queen and son. DAB, p.116. But the mention of Ai-Khang-Hkun makes it unlikely.

happened to pass that way, was asked to try his luck when others failed. He with some hesitation came forward and hit the animal with a single arrow and in fulfilment of his promise the Raja arranged for the marriage of his daughter with him. But Sadhani complained 'why should I get myself married to a man of humble origin?' She agreed to the marriage, though reluctantly, only after extracting a promise from the father to give her whatever she might ask for in future. The marriage was performed only after making the groom undergo prayacitta, a purificatory ceremony. All these indicate that in the eye of the ruling dynasty the Chutiyas were of low origin. Was the ruling dynasty of a superior caste different from the Chutiyas? Mere poverty of the groom could not certainly be the ground for prayacitta. The account as narrated provokes genuine curiosity calling for deeper probing into the background of the ruling house.

Shortly afterwards Sadhani demanded the Golden Cat of her father who was upset by it, yet as promise-bound he took out the Cat from the prayer house and gave it to her with a curse for such a demand. Being deprived of the Cat Raja Dharmarayan relinquished the throne for the son-in-law and went into the forest with his chief queen never to return. The son-in-law then became Raja assuming the title of Nitya Pal. It was during his oppressive and lawless rule that Hso-Hum-Mong invaded the Chutiya kingdom driving Nitya Pal or Anitya Pal, as called by the subjects for his misrule, to Chandra-giri

where the latter being hard pressed by the Ahoms escaped capture by jumping with Sadhani from the hill-top into a stream down below which resulted in their death. Whatever might be the true facts the last resistance of the Chutiyas completely collapsed at Chandan-giri and the Chutiya kingdom of Sadiya became after that an Ahom province. Among the spoils collected from the royal stores and other places were the Golden Sceptre, the Golden Couch, the Golden Cat, the Golden Parasol, the royal palanquins, and a large quantity of fire-arms. All these were brought to Chao Hso-Hum-Mong who was in at Sadiya, the chief town, making it his war-time camp. With the king's orders the spoils were loaded in boats and sent down to the capital. There were also large acquisitions of elephants, horses, cattle and artisans such as bell-metal workers and gold-smiths. There lived in the Chutiya kingdom many Brahmins, Kayasthas, Kalitas and Ganaks who, too, were transferred to the Ahom capital.¹³⁴ The remaining members of the Chutiya royal family and all nobles connected with it were settled at Pakariguri.

After the war was over Phra-Shen-Mong Bar-Gohain was appointed the first Ahom Governor of the Province of Sadiya (Sadiya Khowa Gohain or Chao Bongen). The Chutiya monarchy was never restored. Phra-Shen-Mong was given by the king an armed force of three thousand men and three elephants for controlling that north-eastern frontier province.¹³⁵ Having settled the

134 DAB, p.18 ; AB - 'SMJC' : p.11 ; BBB, op.cit., pp.116-117.

135 DAB, p.18.

affairs of Sadiya the king with all his men returned to the capital. The heads of the Chutiya King and his son and wife were buried at Charaideo in the usual way.¹³⁶ The victory was then celebrated in the Ahom capital by the king by performing the usual Rik-Khan¹³⁷ ceremony.

Phu-Kloi-Mong attacks Sadiya :

Phu-Kloi-Mong, a Nara chieftain,¹³⁸ with a band of armed men, made an inroad into the Sadiya territory. The invader entered into the Bar-Deoliya village and attacked and plundered the inhabitants killing three men of the temple (Deo-Ghar) and also took away an elephant named Plailum. Phra-Shen-Mong, the Governor, unable to deal effectively with the enemies with his small force, immediately reported the matter to the Svargadev and the latter despatched General Shenba, Chao-Hso-Long-Kung-Rin and General Kan-Seng with one thousand men to reinforce the frontier garrison. The Svargadev himself marched after them with another force and joined them at Rurum.

136 About the disposal of the heads the Buranjis give conflicting versions. In AB the text says 'they all returned and came to the hill with the heads of the Chutiyas' ('tang mong pak ma lema doi ru tiura') and nothing more. The author's translation here is apparently wrong. DAB says that the king's head was hung up on a string in the hill. Kashinath Tamuli Phukan's version is that the two heads - one of the king and the other of the minister - were buried under the steps of the two temples at Charaideo so that the Ahom king might walk over them while entering the temples, which Gait accepts. Wade says in his account that the king directed the heads of the Rajah and his son to be exposed on lofty poles on the spot. ACS and SMJC relate that the heads were buried near the Deo-Ghar raising two mounds or tumuli on them, a version more in accord with royal customs.

137 Rik, call, Khan, life. An Ahom ceremony invoking long life or well-being for all in the kingdom. It is officiated by Ahom priests.

138 DAB, p.19.

Phu-Kloi-Mong mounting an elephant proceeded to attack the Ahom forces and was confronted by Theo-Mong-Kham-Jang and Teng-Kham Barduari Saikia. In the combat that took place one Laka-Shung wounded Phu-Kloi-Mong in the thigh with his spear. The latter was next found on a horse, but soon the horse was speared to death by three men of the Ahom army. Phu-Kloi-Mong then gave up the battle and sent an envoy to the Svargadev suing for peace offering his sister Nang-Kham-Deng and two best horses. The Svargadev accepted the peace proposal and the Nara chieftain sent princess Nang-Kham-Deng and the horses with two envoys Phu-Shen-Cheu and Phun-Mong in A.D. 1525. Chao-Hpa Hso-Hum-Mong reciprocated the friendship by sending him a girl named Nang-Kham-Pai, a tusked elephant and twenty Japis (hats) with silver tips.¹³⁹ The Nara chieftain, mentioned here, was not the Sawbwa of Mogaung, but some neighbouring chieftain, probably a Tai-Khamti Chief from Khamti Long. Mogaung Sawbwa was at that time Sam-Lung-paw-maing (1520-26). Neither was he the Kachari King as wrongly said in AB, (p.58).

Hso-Hum-Mong then returned to the capital from Rurum. In A.D. 1526 the king made a number of new appointments. He gave to Kiang-Hseng of the Dhanudharis family the designation of Bhatialis Gohain and appointed him governor of the district of Habung on the north bank. His place was filled by appointing Hseng-Pem as Dhanudharis Gohain. Next Kheo-Khen Banlungia Gohain

¹³⁹ AB, p.58 ; DAB, pp.18-19.

was made Dihingia Gohain and Chao-Pet-Kham-Kling was made Banlungia Gohain.¹⁴⁰

War With The Kacharis :

A brief account of the expansion of the early Kachari kingdom, which at the zenith of its power comprised a greater part of the district of Sibsagar, the northern part of the United District of Mikir and North Cachar Hills and the eastern part of the Nowgong district in the present map of Assam, is contained in the Kachari Buranji, a version of which is also translated by Wade in his book. The names of early Kachari kings known from these Chronicles are successively Bisarpatipha, Vikramadityapha, Mahamanipha, Manipha, Larpha, Khorapha and Dershungpha (or Detshung). Of these Bisarpatipha was a contemporary of Hso-Ka-Hpa and the last two ruled during Hso-Hum-Mong's reign.

Bisharpatipha, says Wade, conquered and added to his principality large areas of territory. Vikramadityapha further extended the kingdom along the southern hills as far east as the borders of NamoHong and Barhat at the cost of the Nagas and the Marans. He worshipped the goddess Thakurani (ten-armed Durga) of whom a statue of pure gold was installed in the town where he made his residence and the town was thenceforward called Sonapur. He also made a gold statue of Baneswar (Mahadev) and set it up in another town, called from that time Banpur. They

had two chief cities Lakshindrapur and Herambapur. Generally the heir-apparent to the throne was the Prince of Lakshindrapur, but Vikramadityapha and Larpha had their royal capital at Lakshindrapur.

Hso-Hum-Mong extended his dominions eastward to the farthest limit of the Brahmaputra valley by his conquest of the Chutiya kingdom. He also had well under control the Habung country on the north bank. But on the west the Kacharis still held sway over the territories west of the Dikhau. After having settled the territorial problem of the east Hso-Hum-Mong now seriously turned his attention to the west. He invested General Kan-Seng Barpatra Gohain with the supreme command to conquer the western country under the powerful Kacharis. Kan-Seng crossed the Kikhau with his army and started operations against the Kacharis whom he successfully drove off to Nam-Dang and from there to the next stronghold at Silpukhuri. He occupied Silpukhuri and the Kacharis retreated to the Gabharu Hill. Then he swung the main part of his army to the north-west and conquered Sital-Negheri thus rounding off the boundary with the Kachari country. Among the arms that fell into the hands of the Ahoms during this campaign guns are mentioned in the Chronicle.¹⁴¹ Beyond these limits the Kacharis so consolidated their position that further conquests became well-nigh impossible by a single sweep. But the Kacharis were very much demoralised by the Ahom successes.

141 KB, p.11.

The Ahoms next claimed Dergaon but resorted to conciliatory tactics and invited the Kacharis to settle mutual rights over the disputed territories according to divine mandates as manifested through certain acts. As a first experiment the Ahom General proposed sacrifices to be offered to the famous Deity at Dergaon both by the Ahoms and the Kacharis. The party whose sacrifice would be accepted by the Deity would get possession of Dergaon and the acceptance would be indicated when the head of the sacrificial animal is severed by a single stroke of the weapon. The Kacharis agreed to it and when on the appointed day sacrifices were offered it was the Ahoms whose sacrifice was accepted, that of the Kacharis rejected. The Kacharis found themselves in the wrong and therefore ceded Dergaon and withdrew to the western bank of the Dhansiri, the river forming the new boundary between the two countries.¹⁴²

General Kan-Seng next laid claim on Marangi. Here, too, by another dexterous device, that of digging two tanks on the Marangi Hill, one of the Ahoms and the other of the Kacharis, and showing how the Ahoms were favoured first by Heaven with water in their tank, and making at the same time a false bird declare the Ahoms as the rightful owners of that part of the country Kan-Seng occupied Marangi driving away the Kacharis to Dijua.¹⁴³ Thus the shift from a battle of arms to a battle of

¹⁴² KB, p.12 ; Wade : op.cit., p.63.

¹⁴³ KB, p.13 ; Wade : op.cit., p.64. Dijua or Mahang-Dijua is situated on the bank of the Jamuna river to the west of the Manipur Road Railway station in the present United District of Mikir and North Cachar Hills.

wits exploiting the superstitious beliefs of the Kacharies was crowned with wonderful success in acquiring vast tracts of new territory and the records show that there was in fact no war over Dergaon (Devar-Gaon) and Marangi in the present Golaghat Sub-Division in their first occupation by the Ahoms. All these happened in the reign of the Kachari Raja Khurapha. Was also the insistent claim of the Ahoms upon the part of territory upto Marangi backed by any previous commitment of the Kachari Raja ? One account says that in the reign of Hso-Han-Hpa there was a war between the Ahoms and the Kacharis and as there was no victory for any side both made peace. The Ahom king gave the Kachari Raja a girl and the latter ceded his territory upto Marangi.¹⁴⁴ Whether this part of the territory was actually vacated by the Kacharis or later reoccupied by them when the Ahoms had to throw all their might against the Chutiyas in the war with them the Chronicles are not clear. But one thing is definite and that is that Khurapha's reign is marked by a great withdrawal of the Kachari power from a large tract of their country against the Ahom pressure and it is also equally clear that the Ahoms built a fort at Maranki (Marangi) in A.D. 1531¹⁴⁵ under the supervision of General Phra-Shen-Mong and Chao-Sheng-Long-Klang-Sheng and another at the mouth of the Jangtima (the Dayang)¹⁴⁶ and garrisoned them. These forts indicated the limits of the Ahom territory at that time in that direction.

144 K.T.P. : op.cit., p.18.

145 AB, p.64.

146 AB, pp.64-65.

Khorapha died and was succeeded by Dershungpha¹⁴⁷ at Dimapur (Hidimbapur). He determined to fight the Ahoms and asked his people to be ready for action. Before coming to any armed clash straightway he first sent to the Ahom camp Demeria Sadar Dab¹⁴⁸ as his envoy to convey his request to fix up permanently by a treaty the river Dhansiri as the boundary between the Ahom and Kachari territories and thus restore good relations for future. But the General Kan-Seng Barpatra Gohain did not entertain the request as the Kachari envoy failed to come with proper etiquette. Hoping no good results from peace negotiations with the Ahoms, who were elated by recent successes, Dershungpha sent an expedition with his brother detcha (or Dercha) in command to attack the Ahom fort at Marangi and capture it. Chao-Hpa Hso-Klen-Mong and the Shairing Raja Hso-Leng rushed out of the fort with a large armed force and fell upon the Kacharis and defeated them. In the battle Shairing Raja killed Detcha.¹⁴⁸ The Ahoms seized a considerable quantity of materials including some swords and cloth. When the report of this clash reached king Hso-Hum-Mong he despatched reinforcements under Thao-Mong-Katak and the king himself moved by boats upstream the Dhansiri to the mouth of the Dayang where a fort was constructed. At this stage there is some confusion in the accounts. Probably an upstart named Khun-Khara seized the Kachari throne

¹⁴⁷ not Dersongpha as in some accounts.

¹⁴⁸ AB, pp. 64; DAB, p. 24; SMJG, p. 13. Here killer is said to be his servant.

and started the offensive against the Ahoms. The Kacharis under the command of the Deka Raja (heir-apparent) ~~xxxxxx~~ ^{powerful} launched a/attack on the Ahoms and the war continued with unabated fury for three months with heavy casualties on both sides. Hso-Hum-Mong was worried when after so much fighting the Kacharies could not be defeated. He invited the diviners, the Deodhais and Bailungs, to tell him by examining the fowls' legs the name of the person capable of defeating the enemies. They unanimously gave the name of General Phra-Shen-Mong then at home after being dismissed from the governorship of Sadiya. The dismissal was in consequence of ^{an} unusual delay on the part of the Governor in reporting in person to the king in spite of being summoned several times, the explanation every time being that the enemies were nearby.¹⁴⁷ The result of the divination compelled the king to appoint General Phra-Shen-Mong as Commander-in-Chief of the Kachari campaign. Phra-Shen-Mong then paid his usual homage to the king and proceeded to direct the operations against the Kacharis.

General Phra-Shen-Mong constructed a bridge over the Dhangsiri and took his army to the west bank. He also built a war camp on that bank for the king who advanced to that place. From that base Phra-Shen-Mong launched a three-pronged attack on Dijua outpost where the Kacharis were ready for action. There was a bloody battle which continued for seven days. Numerous Kacharis fell dead in the battle-field. Yet they

him as his vassal the ancestral kingdom, which had been unjustly seized and until then held by Khun-Khara. The Ahom kings always looked upon the Kachari princes as descendants of a great dynasty of a great race. Hso-Hum-Mong regarded Detshung's offer with due consideration and sent his own envoy to him with a message that the kingdom would be restored if the latter would offer his sister, one thousand rupees and an elephant.¹⁵²

Within a week Prince Detshung and his brother came to the Ahom Court with all that were demanded and additional presents of five hundred swords, five hundred pieces of cloth, one thousand napkins and one hundred sedans

((Doolies)) and offered them to the Svargadev and paid their homage. King Hso-Hum-Mong then proclaimed Detshung as the Raja of the Kachari kingdom and presented him with a diamond ring saying "Be loyal to the Svargadev and be free from crimes as long as this diamond is not turned into lead, tin or silver. Be like the diamond and not like lead, tin or silver which are easily melted. We are now friends and you must not quarrel with us any more".¹⁵³

The king then made many valuable presents to Raja Detshung and permitted him to return to his kingdom and take charge of it as tributary to Svargadev directing at the same time to send to the Ahom Court the golden sceptre, the golden throne, the golden parasol, the golden jar, the golden plates and other paraphernalia belonging to the last king

¹⁵² Sending of an envoy or Kataki by the Ahom king is an indirect recognition of the position of the Kachari Prince. Presents demanded and sent slightly differ in different texts.

¹⁵³ Wade : op.cit., pp.28-29 ; AB - 'SMJC', p.14 ; AB, p.66 ; DAB, p.26.

Khun-Khara.¹⁵⁴ Hso-Hum-Mong also made provisions for the three Manipuri queens of the fugitive king. The annual tributes to be paid by the Kachari Raja were fixed at one thousand rupees, 500 fine embroidered cloth pieces, 550 unembroidered pieces, 1000 swords, and 100 sangis¹⁵⁵ of iron and iron scraps. Hso-Hum-Mong also asked the new Kachari Raja to effect a capture of Khun-Khara. At the time of taking leave Raja Detshung said 'It is learnt that Khun-Khara has entered Bengal. If I can capture him I shall bring him to the Svargadev'.¹⁵⁶ Raja Detshung was thereafter duly installed as Raja at Dimapur.

The escape of Khun-Khara remained a matter of concern and speculation for Hso-Hum-Mong. Raja Detshung, too, on his part neglected to make any serious effort to capture him as promised, which strained Hso-Hum-Mong's feelings towards the Kachari Raja. Added to that arose a boundary dispute between the two countries. Governor Shurpak Barchetiya of Marangi captured a number of Kacharis for carrying on depredations into the Ahom territory. The tension further developed when, as a reply to this incident, the Kachari Raja claimed all the territories south of the Dikhau.¹⁵⁷ Hso-Hum-Mong also got the report that the ex-king Khun-Khara was moving about unmolested in

¹⁵⁴ DAB, p. 26.

¹⁵⁵ Sangi is a burden suspended from one pole and carried by two or more persons on their shoulders. See AB - 'SMJC', p. 14.

¹⁵⁶ DAB, p. 26; ACA, p. 57.

¹⁵⁷ AB - 'SMJC', p. 20. The Dikhau descending from the hills takes a turn to the west and falls into the Brahmaputra. The area claimed, according to the text, seems to be the original Kachari territories extending up to the Dikhau, but that is most unlikely. Probably the river mentioned should have been the Dhansiri.

the Kachari territory, yet no attempt was made to capture him. It was suspected that behind this adventure of the fugitive Kachari ex-king there was some kind of support from Bengal.

Muslim Invasions of Assam :

Hso-Hum-Mong, as expected, received a report that Khun-Khara and a Bengal force under the command of one Luipat (or Luput) were sailing up the Brahmaputra into the Ahom territory with a flotilla of fifty war-boats. It was probably a filifustering expedition led by one Nawab Bit Malik¹⁵⁸ and the great Ujir.¹⁵⁹ Hso-Hum-Mong immediately despatched General Kan-Seng Barpatra-Gohain (Shenglung) and General Shenba to encircle and capture Khun-Khara¹⁶⁰ and drive off the Bengals. At a place called Temani in Nowgong district a big battle was fought with the invaders. The Ahoms captured Khun-Khara¹⁶¹ and defeated the Ujir who then left his boats and fled on a horse. Kan-Seng came to Kunwaripara and fortified it and Shenba returned to the capital. General Sheng Hanan collected from a temple threatened by the Muslims a quantity of dedicated articles such as a golden sceptre, a silver pitcher, gold and silver ornaments adorning the deity, some money and an elephant and submitted them to the king at Dihing.

¹⁵⁸ Probably Bir Malik. Mit Manik of some Assamese Buranjis.

¹⁵⁹ or Vazir. S.N. Bhattacharyya in his Mughal North-East Frontier Policy (p.86) writes he is Ruknu-d din Rukn Khan was the, 'Wazir and general of Alau-d din Husain Shah.' But it cannot be taken as definite.

¹⁶⁰ DAB, p.26 ; AB, p.66.

¹⁶¹ ACA, p.57.

The latter issued orders directing the disposition of Ahom forces at different centres and asked all to make a concerted attack when the enemies would advance.¹⁶² Bit Malik and the Ujir, with a large army and a naval force, laid siege to the fort at Konwaripara. Kan-Seng sallied out of the fort on his war elephant and made a fierce attack on the enemy, who in turn cut off the tail of his elephant and wounded it in one leg. At this, two other reputed warriors forced their way to his assistance on their own elephants. In the combat that ensued General Kan-Seng severed Bit Malik with a stroke of his sword and the latter fell dead. When the leader was killed the Muslims completely lost their morale and fled in disorder hotly pursued by the Ahoms as far as Khagarijan (Nowgong). Numerous Muslims were killed and a large number of guns, horses and other valuable materials captured by the Ahoms. Bit Malik was probably some petty chieftain of Bengal who had been persuaded by Khun-Khara to lead an expedition to the rich country of the Ahoms more for plunder than for any permanent conquest, but Hso-Hun-Mong's generals smashed their effort killing the Nawab himself.¹⁶³

The rise of Ala-ud-din Husain Shah of Bengal (Gaur) and his memorable capture of Kamatapur in Koch Behar in A.D. 1498, then under the Khen King Nilambar, which made him soon

¹⁶² DAB, pp.26-27 ; AB, p.67.

¹⁶³ Nawab Bit Malik's invasion was not of such a magnitude as can be called a part of Ala-ud-din Husain Shah's or of his successor's eastern campaigns for conquest.

master of the whole tract of country as far east as the Barnadi opposite the present town of Gauhati put the Ahom rulers on guard. This Muslim conquest, which took place about one year after Hso-Hum-Nong's accession, is proved beyond doubt, not so much by any good literary evidence as by the coins and inscriptions of Ala-ud-din Husain Shah, who is called in them 'the conqueror of Kamru (Kamarupa) and Kamata'. His coins bearing a date as late as 924 A.H. (A.D. 1518) and styling him the conqueror of Kamru (Kamarupa) and Kamata have been found.¹⁶⁴ The date and the fact of the destruction of Kamata are also confirmed by a contemporaneous inscription found by Mr. Westmacott at Maldah, bearing the date 907 A.H. corresponding to A.D. 1501-2, which belonged to a Madrasa built by Husain Shah in commemoration of his conquest of Kamata and Kamarupa.¹⁶⁵ Before leaving the country Husain Shah appointed his son Governor of Nilambar's territories to follow up the conquest still further into the east. (The Cooch Behar State, p.225). He then pushed the conquest to the eastern limit of the Kamata-Kamarupa kingdom and made his headquarters at Hajo, placing at Kamata probably Durlav Indra, a son of the last king, as a vassal ruler to be related below. Gait also points out that Husain Shah left behind his son who became Governor at Hajo for the newly conquered territory. This son was probably Husain Khan, who was later killed by the Ahoms

164 S.N. Bhattacharyya : A History of Mughal North-east Frontier Policy, (Calcutta, 1929), p.71.

165 JASB, 1874, p.281 ; Stewart's History of Bengal, p.112. Gait : op.cit., pp.43-45.

in the battle of the Dikrai which is described below. This ruler made a settlement of Muslims in the neighbourhood of Hajo in Kamarupa, started construction of a grand mosque on a hillock and is believed to have brought to Hajo a Muslim saint named Sultan Ghiyasu'd-Din Awliya for propagating Islam in this country. After the death of Husain Shah's son in the war two Muslim chieftains managed the affairs of Kamarupa, Sultan Ghiyasu'd-Din Awliya being the last Governor at Hajo, who was buried near the mosque. This place is held in great esteem by the Muslims to this day as a place of pilgrimage and the mosque is called Poa Macca (i.e. one-fourth of Mecca). Mirza Nathan refers to this 'hillock of Sultan Ghiyasu'd-Din Awliya' in his Baharestan-I-Ghaybi in connection with a massacre in its shrine committed by the Ahoms. Gait further says that some years after Husain Shah's conquest of Kamarupa an attempt was made to annex the Ahom country, which the Ahoms replied by such a powerful counter-attack as eventually led to the annihilation of the whole Muslim army and entire loss of the newly conquered Kamarupa and Kamata territories.

This deliberate Muslim attempt to conquer the Ahom kingdom is undoubtedly represented by Turbak Khan's invasion of April 1532¹⁶⁶ during the reign of Hso-Hum-Mong. Turbak marched on Assam with 30 elephants, 1,000 horses, many cannon, guns and other arms and a large force. Nasir-ud-din Nusrat

166 AB, p.68 ; Gait : op.cit, p.92 ; DAB, p.27.
Lakni Raing is the date mentioned which is
 A.D. 1532.

Shah (1518-33), the eldest son of Ala-ud-din Husain Shah, was then the ruler of Bengal,¹⁶⁷ who is supposed to have directed this enterprise. From the numismatic and epigraphic evidences it is clear that Husain Shah's hold on Kamata and Kamarupa was not lost during his life time. Though records, throwing light on the happenings of the next thirteen years, are lacking, yet the fact is there that the first most important war between the Ahoms and the Muslims under Turbak Khan was the one that broke out in April 1532 (Lakni Raing) according to Ahom history and it took more than three years for the Ahoms to defeat and drive out the Muslims from Kamarupa and Kamata. This was a protracted war with heavy losses to both sides. Its main theatre was the western front of the Ahom kingdom comprising Kaliabar and the Kapili Valley in Nowgong, the Dikrai and Bharali valleys of the present Sub-Division of Texpur and the Brahmaputra in between them. In the battle of Kaliabar near the confluence of the Kallang and the Brahmaputra General Phra-Shen-Mong killed the Muslim General Hayat Khan.¹⁶⁸ The Ahom army pressed the Muslims hard and compelled them to retreat to the Kapiliganga. Then Turbak issued forth from his fort with a force using elephants, horses and guns and made a powerful counter-attack on the Ahoms. A bloody battle was fought in which eight great Ahom generals including the redoubtable Commander-in-Chief Phra-Shen-Mong

¹⁶⁷ Mazumdar, Raychaudhuri & Datta : An Advanced History of India (Macmillan, London, 1956), p. 347.

¹⁶⁸ A MS. History of Assem.

Bar-Gohain fell¹⁶⁹ and Hso-Klen-Mong Tipam Raja (also called Garhganya Raja) received a wound from an enemy arrow and his horse was also killed. Prince Hso-Klen-Mong, therefore, left for the capital for treatment. The generals of the Ahom army then retreated and met king Hso-Hum-Mong in the fort at Sala (Tai-Ahom Shaola between Dergaon and Kaliabar), where he had made his camp to be in touch with the progress of the war. The king immediately appointed Kan-Seng Bargatra-Gohain as Commander-in-Chief of the Ahom army and ordered the generals to attack the enemies acting under his supreme command. Troops were stationed at all strategic fronts right upto the Barnadi in North Kamrup. There is mention of the Echaris fighting on the side of the Ahoms against the Muslims.¹⁷⁰ The Muslims advanced to Kaliabar and in November 1535^{some} of them reached Ghiladhari.¹⁷¹ Meanwhile Prince Hso-Klen-Mong, with his wound healed up, returned to Sala. The Muslims further

169 It is narrated in the MS History of Assam that when Hayat Khan fell his wife came forward to fight but General Phra-Shen-Mong Bar-Gohain refused to strike a lady and at this moment the enemy killed him. When the news of Phra-Shen-Mong's death reached his wife, Wang-Son-Hsen-Kham (the famous ever adored Mula Gabharu), who was a daughter of king Hso-Hum-Mong, she mounted the war elephant Langji (or Nangji) and sallied forth into the thick of the battle and fought the enemy with wonderful bravery killing many of them before she herself was killed in action. It is further said in a number of Buranjis that for too short a time to come out for the war both the husband and the wife could not provide themselves with the proper war uniforms which made their persons vulnerable to the enemy, otherwise they could not have been so easily killed.

170 AM, p. 69.

171 in the Sub-Division of Colaghat.

advanced and pitched their tent opposite the Ahom fort at Sala. After sometime they also took the offensive against the Ahom garrison at the fort and burnt three lines of houses of the Ahom camp. The Ahoms replied by pouring on the attackers boiling water from the fort. This was followed by a regular battle between the two sides, the Muslims making a series of cavalry charges under a barrage of their cannon and gun-fire. The Ahoms, unable to hold their ground, retreated into their fort which was then besieged by the enemies. A Muslim naval unit also attacked the Buroi fort on the north bank where the three princes, Hso-Klen-Mong Tipam Raja, Hso-Tang Namrupiya Raja and Prince Hso-Khring engaged the enemies. The Ahom generals by a flanking attack and simultaneous frontal charge overwhelmed the Muslim navy which was then forced rapidly to retreat. Soon after this the Ahoms also won a great naval victory at Duimnisila killing two thousand and five hundred Muslims including a general named Shyamnath and capturing many of their boats and materials. Having defeated the Muslims in the northern theatre the three princes crossed to the south bank with their navy and fiercely attacked and defeated the Muslim force besieging the fort at Sala and relieved it.

At this crucial moment reinforcements consisting of six elephants, 100 horses and 1,000 troops arrived from Bengal to help Turbak under a general named Husain Khan. The Muslims then concentrated their forces for attack at

the mouth of the Dikrai on the north bank. Hso-Hun-Mong transferred his royal camp to Duimunisila between Sala and Kaliabar. The Ahom army waited for action at Dikraimukh for two months and a half face to face with the enemy line. Meanwhile under the direction of the king it constructed a fort and erected ramparts extending from it. The Muslims started the attack with cavalry and guns. Other Ahom generals soon reinforced their army at this fort. From the Muslim side one Bharat Singh and a Koch Katoal first attacked the Ahoms and in the encounter the enemies were surrounded and driven up the Dikrai which gave an advantage to the Ahoms who then fell upon them both from the rear and the front. The enemies were massacred in great numbers and those that survived were routed. In the run many with elephants were bogged down in a lake where they were slaughtered en masse by the Ahoms. Turbak made a cavalry charge on the Ahoms, but the latter discharged their arrows at the horses with such deadly effect that most of them fell and the rest fled away with their men on them, who lost all control, and reached the Bharali. Many Muslims left their horses and sailed off down the river Brahmaputra. It was in this battle that Hussain Khan was killed. The Ahoms seized 28 elephants, 850 horses, a great number of big and small guns and cannon, a box full of gold and 80 bags of silver coins. All these were presented to the king at Duimunisila. Among the persons captured was also Turbak's daughter Princess Sawaloi whom the king took under his

custody. The king was pleased for the victory and presented the elephants and horses to the generals. In the Tai-Ahom Chronicle it is said that the heads of Turbak and Husain were entombed on the hill Charaideo,¹⁷² but nothing is said about how and where Turbak was killed. One version in some Assamese Buranjis is that, unable to kill Turbak even after three years' fighting, Kan-Seng pretended to submit to the Muslim chief and obtained permission to enter his camp for offering submission. Kan-Seng and some of his officers entered his camp with swords and spears carefully concealed and at dead of night, while Turbak was kept engaged in conversation, they suddenly fell upon him and speared him to death. As pre-arranged other officers also, by simultaneous attacks, killed Turbak's officers and many of his men.¹⁷³ In another account Kan-Seng is said to have entered Turbak's camp under the pretence that the king was going to put him to death for his failure to win victory as Commander-in-Chief and having entered it pierced him to death.¹⁷⁴ Gait says that Turbak tried to save the day by leading a cavalry charge in person in the Barali battle, but was transfixed by a spear, and, when he fell, the defeat became a rout.¹⁷⁵ This appears to be the correct version and gets support from Tamuli Phukan's Assam Buranji.¹⁷⁶

172 AB, p.73. In DAB (p.32), the head of Turbak's general Husain Khan is said to have been entombed on the hill.

173 ACA, p.61.

174 AB - 'SMJC', p.22.

175 Gait : op.cit., p.94.

176 See p.22.

Liberation Of Kamarupa-Kamata By The Ahoms :

The Ahom expeditionary force, headed by General Ton-Kham¹⁷⁷ and aided by General Kan-Seng and General Kham-Peng, pursued the retreating enemies across the Muslim dominions of Kamarupa and Kamata receiving little resistance in them and reached the Karatoya, the eastern boundary of Gaur proper, where the victors washed their swords. In this retreat the remnants of the Muslim invading army was practically wiped out by the Ahoms and in this the latter must have received the co-operation of the Kamatas against their erstwhile enemy. In the extant Tai-Ahom literature there is no mention of Husain Shah's invasion of the Ahom kingdom, nor of any Ahom expedition sent for Kamata or Kamarupa against that ruler. Turbak, said to be a scion of the family of Gaureswar, made the first serious effort to annex Assam during the reign of Hso-Hum-Mong.¹⁷⁸

177 Sometimes written Shon-Kham. He is the son of the great Phra-Shen-Mong Bar-Gohain.

178 In one account of Assamese history Turbak is said to have been sent by Gaureswar to rescue his daughter Sushuddhi called ^{or} Gaurama or Garama, noted for beauty, from the place of her husband Kamateswar on the report that Princess Garama was being maltreated by the latter on the alleged ground that she had had a scandalous connection with the son of the royal priest. Unable to resist Turbak Kamateswar submitted to Svargadev Hso-Hum-Mong for help leaving behind his chief wife Sulochana and son Durlav Indra. Garama fled to the Kachari king, who accepted her as his chief consort, but she was later captured by the Ahoms and presented to the Svargadev with her son Madan after the Kachari king was killed in the Ahom-Kachari war. Turbak invaded the Kachari kingdom for her and then proceeded to attack the Ahom kingdom where she had been taken. (See AB - 'SMJC', pp. 18-22). In the account the names of Gaureswar and Kamateswar are not mentioned. It may be noted that king Nilambar's youngest queen Vanamala had a similar episode in which the Minister Sashi Patra's son Manohar was involved. The king with rage put the Minister's son to death, had a dish prepared of his flesh and made the father partake of it. At this Sashi Patra went to Husain Shah and persuaded him to march against Kamatapur. Husain Shah then destroyed and sacked Kamata ; but Garama finds no mention in the Tai-Ahom Buranjis.
(continued)

When the Ahom army of black-uniformed and terrible-looking soldiers appeared on the border of Gaur in pursuit of the Muslims, the Sultan of Bengal (Gaur) became frightened and immediately made overtures for peace by offering two of his daughters Khanbibī Harmatī and Khanbibī Darmatī to Svargadev's seraglio with five eastern Parganas as dowries,¹⁷⁹ namely, Ghoraghat, Patla-doh,¹⁸⁰ Eghara-Sendur, Fariabad and Sherpur¹⁸¹ the last being not far to the north of Dacca. All these Parganas are in the districts of Rangpur and Mymensingh on the west of the Sonkosh river. It shows that the part of Gaur territory lying to the east of the Karatoya and just south of the kingdom of Kamata came under Ahom sovereignty.

(continued from the previous foot-note) Why should a great conqueror like Hussain Shah give his daughter in marriage to Kamateswar, a Hinduised king? Garama's flight to the Kachari kingdom at the approach of the rescuing party is again unaccountable. Thus the story of Garama does not seem to have any historical basis in this context. See also KIB, pp. 36-37, and f.n.

179 AB - 'SMJG', p. 24; ACA, pp. 62-63; A brief and incomplete reference in K.T.P.'s Assam Buranjī, p. 22. The Chronicles also show discrepancies in mentioning the names of the Parganas. BBB (p. 99 of DAB) mentions Sherpur, Kairabari, Dashkounia, Bahirbundh and Bhitribundh, all of which are said to be 'localities in the present districts of Rangpur and Mymensingh'. Curiously enough ACA calls Gaureswar's daughter Rajani Kunwari and BBB calls her Bhajani, but, as said above, these were the daughters of Kamateswar married to earlier Ahom kings.

180 now a locality in the Ghoraghat Pargana of Rangpur district, not to be confused with village Patila-doha in the Barpet Sub-Division of Kamrup.

181 in the Mymensingh district.

under the new relation with the Bengal Sultan. Thus in the beginning of A.D. 1534 the Ahoms became master of a vast expanse of territory extending from the eastern extremity of Assam to the Karatoya on the west embracing within it Kamarupa and Kamata and beyond right down to the neighbourhood of the Dacca district in Eastern Bengal (now East Pakistan).

At the instance of General Ton-Kham a small brick temple was constructed on the bank of the Karatoya and a tank was also excavated by the side of the temple in commemoration of the victory.¹⁸² This monument also demarcated the boundary between Kamata and Gaur.¹⁸³ At the same time a vassal chief of Kamata, who was probably no other than one Durlav Indra who became free from the Muslim domination and placed himself under the protection of the Ahom king, and offered a daughter of his to the Svargadev.¹⁸⁴

Ahom Embassy To Orissa :

An Assamese Chronicle¹⁸⁵ also contains an account that a six-man embassy that accompanied General Ton-Kham proceeded to Orissa and met king Vikramasena of that country, a descendant of Indradyumna, and said 'It is the command of Svarga Maharaja of Udayagiri that we should wash our swords in the Karatoya after winning victory in the war (with Bengal)

182 AB - 'SMJC', p.28 ; A MS History of Assam.

183 K.P.F. op.cit., p.22.

184 A MS History of Assam. Here Durlav Indra is to be distinguished from Durlavnarayana, a 14th century Kamata king, a contemporary of Sri Sankar Deva's great-great-grandfather Chandibar.

185 AB - 'SMJC', pp.24-28.

and having made friendship with Gaureswar come and salute the (Jagannath) Thakur and excavate a tank and consecrate it (to the god) and then return. For this purpose 200 gold mohurs are sent with us'. Having learnt all this Vikramasena was pleased to conduct these new visitors from distant Mong-Dun-Hsun-Kham (Assam) to the Jagannath Temple and throw open its doors, whereupon they duly saluted the Thakur and then excavated a tank nearby, the banks of which were paved with bricks, and performed the consecration ceremony by offer of gold mohurs of Svargadev Hso-Hum-Mong to the Thakur, the Vairagi Brahmins and king Vikramasena receiving in return the Thakur's mahaprasad and nirmalya for the Svargadev. Vikramasena also laid on the forehead of the Jagannath Thakur a lustrous jem offered by the visitors who had secured it on being left behind by a cobra during their encampment on the march by the side of the Sri Suryya Hill between the town of Goalpara and Dalgoma on the south bank in the Goalpara district of Assam. It is said that the jem is still to be seen glittering on the forehead of the Thakur. In this account king Vikramasena is described as son of Purusothama which shows that Vikramasena was but another name of king Prataparudra (1497-1540) of Orissa, a contemporary of Hso-Hum-Mong (1497-1539) and a disciple of Sri Chaitanya who flourished at that time. Prataparudra, whose territories once extended from Hugli in West Bengal to Guntur in Andra Pradesh, may be called the greatest king of the declining phase of the Orissa royal power and this decline is attributed by many to the loss of martial spirit under the influence of Vaishnavism preached by Sri Chaitanya.

This pilgrimage to the Jagannath Temple at Puri had probably a political mission behind it. The conjecture is that, either at the instance of Hso-Hum-Mong or that of Vikramasena, the mission aimed at some form of an alliance between Assam and Orissa primarily against Muslim expansions. For Hso-Hum-Mong or his Generals, who followed their ancestral religion, had nothing to do with Hinduism or the Jagannath Thakur as such. The pilgrimage was therefore a cover for the secret political mission. In this context we may remember how Orissa was attacked and weakened by the Hindus of Vijayanagar and the Muslims of Golkunda in the first quarter of the sixteenth century.

Vishva Singha's Submission to Hso-Hum-Mong :

While the Ahom generals were returning with the Gaur princesses the Koch chief Vishva Singha of Mount Chikna¹⁸⁶

186 A Koch chief named Hajo had two daughters Jira and Hira, who were married to a Mech named Hariya or Haridas who lived in Mount Chikna (Chikanai Parbat of Kamrupar Buranjī, 2nd. Ed. DHAS, p.10), probably Chiknajhar in Gualpara district near the Bhutan Hills. The elder Jira had two sons Chandan (elder) and Madan (younger) and later Hira had two sons by god Mahadeva named Shishu and Vishu. Chandan and Madan fought the Governor of Chikna and killed him, but then Madan was also killed in the fight. Chandan proclaimed himself king of Chikna in A.D. 1510 or Raja Saka 1, the Era of the Koch Behar family. On Chandan's death Vishu, the younger brother, became king in A.D. 1522 (R.S. 14) at the age of twenty-two under the title of Vishva Singha.

His brother Shishu served as the Raikat i.e. 'head of the family and hereditary Prime Minister'. Vishva Singha appointed twelve other ministers from the twelve families of Meches of the locality. The coil of a serpent's tail, said to be Siva's Serpent, formed his throne and the hood his umbrella. The sceptre he wielded was called Hanumanadanda with a silver head of a monkey. (See Rajonakshyana, Chaps. VII and VIII as referred to in The Cooch Behar State, pp.225-27.) There exist traces of the ruined monuments called 'Vishva Singha's killa (fort)' in Bhutan some ten to twelve miles north of Chikna. See KBI, p.90.

wanted to intercept them,¹⁸⁷ but his ministers¹⁸⁸ warned him against any such rash adventure at a time when there was yet much to be done for internal consolidation while the powerful Ahoms had further strengthened their position by establishing friendship with Gaureswar. They advised him therefore to make friendship with the Ahoms. He accepted the advice, met General Ton-Kham and presented to him for Sri Sri Svarganarayander (Hso-Hum-Mong) one pot of gold, one pot of silver, five red shawls and two all-white whisks as tokens of homage. In return Ton-Kham gave him all the territory west of the Sonkosh offered as dowries by the Padsha of Gaur and asked him to pay annual tributes to the Svargadev from whom he would receive all protection against foreign enemies.¹⁸⁹ He so settled the newly acquired territories because he knew that the Ahom monarch had no desire for more territories.¹⁹⁰ The expedition went so far only to assist Kamateswar to be free from the Muslim yoke.¹⁹¹ After this when Ton-Kham arrived at the capital and reported the achievements of the expedition to the king, the latter highly appreciated his actions and conferred upon him the title of Bar A'zam.¹⁹² Others who accompanied him were also rewarded for their meritorious services. One result of the war with Turbak

187 Ibid, p.28.

188 Kalketu and Dhuma Sardar of the Assamese account.

189 AB - 'SMJC', p.28 ; A MS History of Assam ; KB, p.11. The statement in Gait's Koch Kings of Kamarupa (See also H.S.B.: op.cit., p.28) that Vishva Singha went to make war on the Ahoms, but fell short of provisions on the way and returned home is unconvincing in the light of the facts presented by documents collected recently.

190 ACA, p.63 ; A MS History of Assam.

191 ACA, p.63 ; A MS History of Assam.

192 Great A'zam (the Powerful one).

was that a considerable number of Muslims could not escape from Assam. They were captured and put to the work of supplying grass to the royal elephants. As they proved inefficient and ignorant in this job they were transferred to the paddy fields for growing food. Here, too, they equally failed. Then they took to the trade of making brass vessels and became known as Mariyas, probably from the nature of the trade.

There broke out a great pestilence among the cattle population of the kingdom in March 1534 which took a heavy toll of their life during the next three months of its spread.

Naga Disturbance in Kham-Jang :

In A.D. 1535 Hso-Hum-Mong received reports from the Khamjāngia Gohain (Governor of Kham-Jang) that the Nagas of the lower and higher regions were joining together to attack him. So he immediately despatched a force under General Hso-Leng, the Raja of Shairing, and General Shenglung (Barpatra-Gohain). They attacked the Nagas from different directions. Hso-Leng proceeded by the route of Namruk making his first camp at that place and fought and subdued the Nagas of Jakhang and the neighbouring areas. Shenglung reduced to submission the villages of Phakai, Tashiteng and Shireng. Hso-Klen-Hpa and Tipam Raja and Prince Hso-Teng, Ton-Kham, /Shēnab occupied the Jaktung Naga area and then encamped at Nam-Chang. Most of the Nagas from these areas fled to Tablung and then to Barkala. Early in 1536 the Ahoms also annexed Mahang with its brine springs by subjugating the local Nagas. The Ahom Generals then

returned to the capital and, not long after, the Nagas submitted to the Ahoms presenting the four big guns left behind by the latter. In the Province of Kham-Jang complete tranquillity was restored and the king received an elephant and about a hundred bisons (methon) brought from those areas.

Kachari Rebellion of 1536 :

End Of The Kachari Rule (Early Period) :

There was a fresh Kachari rising in A.D. 1536 in contravention of the terms of peace concluded between Hso-Hum-Mong and Detshung (Dershungpha) in A.D. 1531. General Hso-Leng was invested with supreme command by the King and sent against the Kacharis with an army. Other generals placed under him were Katak and Hanan. They marched to Marangi and then to Hamdoi where they encamped. The king himself moved up to Marangi. Three other generals, namely Prince Hso-Klen-Mong, Ton-Kham and Tai-Mong-Lung soon joined the king at his camp. Princes Hso-Teng and Hso-Leng encamped in the fort at Banphu and occupied the area. Ton-Kham, Katak and Mong-Klang advanced up the Dayang to attack the Kacharis from their right, General Hanan and a few others proceeded to attack them from their left and General Nang-Lao and General Klong-Rot advanced straight by boats upstream the Dhansiri and delivered a frontal attack on the Kachari fort. The Kacharis opened fire from their large guns wounding a number of Ahom soldiers. The state of the battle was reported to the Princes Hso-Teng and Hso-Leng who with General Shenglung speedily marched against the Kacharis and reinforced

their army engaged in the battle with them. The Kacharis unable to hold out began to flee in disorder with the result that a great number of them were killed by the Ahoms. The pursuing Ahom soldiers traced out the Kachari Raja Detshung in the fort on the Doimari Hill preparing to cross the river Khamdam. Raja Detshung was nearly encircled when he escaped to Lenguriya and then to his capital Ita-Nagar. As the Ahom forces advanced up the Dhansiri in the pursuit the Raja fled from his capital to the town Demera (or Tangmara). Hso-Klen-Mong, with his officers and troops, reached the town but it was virtually deserted. After a search the Kachari Raja was found and killed. Some members of his family including one of his sons were also slain in the attack. The Raja's golden sceptre, throne and treasures were seized and brought to king Hso-Hum-Mong who was at Kuhiarbari at the time.¹⁹³ Hso-Hum-Mong also received a queen of the late Kachari Raja and her son who was probably very young at that time. The king then returned to the capital with the nobles and the army and performed the ceremony of Mo-Dam Mo-Phi.¹⁹⁴ He admitted the queen into his palace and treated her son with favour.¹⁹⁵

In the month of Dinohit (May-June), Raja Detshung's head was buried at Charaideo in a separate grave by the side of Turbak's tomb.¹⁹⁶ Hso-Hum-Mong then appointed General Sheng-lung as Governor of the Kachari country, which was then made

193 AB, pp.75-77 ; DAB, pp.33-35.

194 A ceremony in which oblations are offered to the dead and sacrifices to the gods.

195 Wade : op.cit., p.66.

196 AB, p.77.

into a new Ahom province, and sent a number of generals to assist him. Thus ended for the first time the last vestiges of the Kachari kingdom.

There is mention in the Tai-Ahom Chronicle that in the winter of 1537 the vassal Koch king Bishu (Vishva Singha) and his minister Shishu (Shishva Singha) of the hill kingdom of Chikna paid a customary visit to the Ahom capital to offer homage to Svargadev Hso-Hum-Mong. They brought as presents to the suzerain 'two horses, one white and the other gray, a pictured girdle, a large spotted whisk, twenty white whisks, a chain of pearls and a string of coral beads'.¹⁹⁷

Another important reference in the Tai-Ahom Chronicle is that Hso-Hum-Mong made friendship with Raja Chaomen of Manipur and offered to him a girl of the Lannakhru family. In gratitude the Raja in return sent to the Ahom monarch a Manipuri princess, who was received with honour.¹⁹⁸ There were also exchanges of valuable presents between the two kings.

At a later date the Kachari nobles made representation to Hso-Hum-Mong through the Chao Marangki (Marangikhowa Gohain) stating the semi-anarchical condition of the Kachari country and praying for appointing the captive Kachari Prince in the Ahom Court as a vassal king of their country under the Svargadev. The question was discussed by the king with his

¹⁹⁷ AB, p.77. Here the Deodhai Asam Buranji's version that an embassy of two men were only sent to the Ahom court is obviously contradicted by the next statement after one sentence that Bishu himself prayed to the Ahom king saying "If I, your vassal, is protected both in adversity and prosperity I shall every year pay homage to you". See DAB, p.35.

¹⁹⁸ AB, pp.77-78 ; DAB, p.35.

ministers who advised him to pacify the Kacharis by granting their prayer. The Prince was then married to a lady of the Court and sent with his mother to Lakshindrapur where he was installed as a feudatory prince of the Kachari country under the title of Nirbhoynarayan.¹⁹⁹ It is not clear whether General Shenglung (Kan-Seng Barpatra-Gonain) still continued in the Kachari capital as a Resident Governor, but it appears that his responsibility did not immediately cease on installation of the Kachari Prince.

About May in the year 1537 Hso-Hum-Mong did the disgraceful act of marrying a daughter of one Sonari (goldsmith), a man of low social status, and making her his chief queen with the result that the heir-apparent Prince Hso-Klen-Mong's mother left the palace and went to live at Charaideo. This caused a bitter difference between the king and his son Prince Hso-Klen-Mong. The latter left his father's place and proceeded to live in the town of Garhgaon. The king sent for him several times, but Hso-Klen refused to come to Dihing (Charagua) to pay respects to his father on the ground that he could not pay the same respects to his low-born consort. On one occasion the king went to Bakatha and summoned Prince Hso-Klen's mother and made her take an oath of fidelity in the name of the gods. This fact brought the matter to a head and Hso-Klen became furious. He employed a group of men to kill off

¹⁹⁹ KB, pp.19-20 ; AB - 'SMJC', p.22 ; Wade : op.cit. p.68. KB (p.15) says Nirbhoynarayan's real name was Madan and both KB and AB - 'SMJC', (p.20) say that the queen's name was Garāma, but her identity is a matter of controversy as already pointed out.

the king and one Kachari amongst them managed to enter the king's bed chamber and stab him to death in A.D. 1539 in the month of Dinsham (Magh or January-February). The assassin was afterwards arrested and executed as a dangerous element by Hso-Klen-Mong himself.

Hso-Hum-Mong, with all his enterprise and resounding successes in extending his dominions from the eastern extremity of the Brahmaputra valley to the Karatoya and the neighbourhood of Dacca, failed at an advanced age to uphold the full dignity of his royal office owing to a sudden lapse of personal character. Besides other causes of dissatisfaction his passion for a girl of non-royal origin, whom he went so far as to raise to the status of the chief queen, disrupted his household leading to the tragic consequence of his own end at the hands of an assassin. But for this his glorious achievements in eliminating the powers of the two rival kingdoms, those of the Chutiyas and the Kacharis, and in repulsing the dreaded Muslim invasions with complete success are to be credited with laying the real foundation of the Ahom kingdom in Assam. He also reorganized the social structure on the basis of clans and crafts and improved the defences of the country. Growing influence of the Brahmins and of the Vaishnava reformation undertaken by Sri Sankar Dev was another feature of his reign.

15. Hso-Klen-Mong (1539-1552) :

After the assassination of his father the Tipam Raja Hso-Klen-Mong (Hso-Klen-Hpa) ascended the throne in A.D. 1539

and made his capital at Garhgaon for which he is also popularly called Garhgaya Raja. In A.D. 1541, according to the Deodhai Asam Buranji, he appointed his brother Prince Hso-Leng, the Shairing Raja, as the Raja of Tipam, second brother Prince Hso-Teng, the Namrupia Raja, as the Raja of Shairing and the youngest brother Prince Hso-Khring as the Raja of Namrup under the title Prince Lan-Chang. These arrangements were necessitated by the vacancy of the office of Raja in Tipam when Hso-Klen-Mong became king. The transfers made also caused a vacancy of the Raja's office in the Province of Namrup to which the youngest brother, who was without that honour, was posted.

During Hso-Klen-Mong's reign Lajan and Lapet Chao-Phrang-Dam were successively Bura-Gohains ; and Ton-Kham Bar-Gohain was the Rajmantri. Hso-Klen-Mong did not favour the idea of having both Chumdeo and Kakshmi-Narayan deities representing two different faiths inside the palace. He therefore installed the Chumdeo in a separate temple outside the palace but inside the main Gate of the palace compound.

Chao Hso-Klen-Mong at least thrice visited the Kachari country between A.D. 1541 and 1544 for a fuller knowledge of the state of affairs of that country and for making arrangements in it for a more efficient administration. He first appointed Prince Hso-Tam as the Governor of the Kachari country (Chaolung Tima) at Dimapur. He was later replaced by Prince Hso-Leng, for he marched for action against the Chutiyas who had, in the

meantime, made a sudden attack on General Hanan on the bank of the Disang river killing him and carrying off his wife and son. The Chutiya country was devastated by the Ahom general as a reprisal during A.D. 1543-44 until he was called back by the king.

The petty chiefs called Bhuyas of the Kapili valley seem to have become turbulent and a threat to the smooth running of affairs of the Kachari province. Chao Hso-Klen-Mong then took action against them, transferred their abode nearer the capital and placed them under supervision. The Bara Bhuyas then paid their homage to the Svargadev.

Conflicts With The Koches :

Three Koch princes,²⁰⁰ Ramchandra, Dip Singha and Hemadhar, all brothers of Naranarayan, sailed up the Brahmaputra in A.D. 1546 with 3,000 Koches and after performing purificatory

200 Gait writes that Vishva Singha 'married in one day eighteen wives according to Gandharva ceremony. Two of these wives came from Nepal, two from Kamarupa, one from Kashmira, four from Benares, three from Sonitapura (the modern Tezpur), two from Mithila. Ten months later, each of his wives gave birth to a son, the names of whom were Nara Singha, Malla Deva, who was afterwards known as Naranarayan, Sukladhvaja, Gosain Kamala, Maidan, Ramchandra, Sura Singha, Mana Singha, Mecha, Vrishaketu, Rama Narayana, Ananta, Dipa Singha, Hemadhar, Megha Narayana, Jagat, Chandra, and Surya'. - His Koch Kings of Kamarupa. Whether Vishva Singha really married his wives from so many different countries at a time or not, that he had some eighteen sons is a fact. According to Kamrupar Buranjī (p.11) the names of his sons are first Mal and Sukla who were followed by sixteen others, namely, Gohain Kamal, Gohain Maidan, Gohain Ramchandra, Gohain Sura Singha, Vrishaketu, Ramnarayan, Ananda, Digu Singha (?) probably Dipa Singha, Hemadhar, Megharayan, Jagat, Rupchand, Hari Singha, Man Singha, Mecha and Suryasen.

ablutions at Bhramarakunda²⁰¹ proceeded up to Sala in Nowgong where they encamped. The Koches there created an incident by seizing and taking away a boat with five men belonging to an Ahom officer called Bar-Handikoi.²⁰² This exposed the real purpose of the pilgrimage and there was at once an armed conflict between the Ahoms and the Koches. In the first phase of the war, which took place on the Dikrai, a number of Ahom generals fell with a large number of their troops at the hands of the Koch archers who collected at least 100 heads at Bharalimukh. The Ahoms, unable to hold their ground, retreated in a disorderly manner and crossed to the south bank of the Brahmaputra. They rallied themselves at Karanga and proceeded by boats to Kaliabar, but from the latter place they were again driven back by the Koches to Sala where a bloody battle was fought. The Ahoms used elephants against the Koches and defeated them.²⁰³

Then there assembled at Jabaka by order of the king the veteran generals Prince Hso-Leng and Shenglung. In A.D. 1547 the Koches advanced to Narayanpur where they erected a fort. The Ahom generals then by a powerful pincer movement delivered onslaughts on both flanks of the enemies, with one column making a frontal attack. This appears to be the first major engagement at a place called Changinimukh according to AB - 'SMJC' (p.30) in which the Koch prince Dipa Singha was killed. King Hso-Klen-Mong himself with the Bura-Gohain followed

²⁰¹ in Darrang north of Odalguri. See KBI, map, p.123. ~~201 was at the foot of the mountain which is now the site of the present settlement suggests that the kunda was at the foot of Bhramarakunda in the north bank opposite Singhat.~~

²⁰² AB - 'SMJC' p.30.

²⁰³ AB, p.80 ; DAB, p.38.

the generals in the centre and arrived at the fort at Pichala. At the same time Lan-Chang (Prince Hso-Khring) was put in charge of the war boats. The Koches then took the offensive and there was a fierce battle at Pichala. Generals Hso-Leng, Shenglung and all others surrounded the enemies, pressed them into the Pichala river and massacred them winning a decisive victory.²⁰⁴ Thereafter the king performed the Rik-khan ceremony.

There was a very violent earthquake in A.D. 1548 which threw up to the surface sands and ashes.

Hso-Klen-Mong also intervened in a boundary dispute between the Shan Sawbwa, probably Sao-Sui-Kwei (1526-58) of the Nara country (Mogaung) and the Burmese and the former, whose family was related to the Ahom royal family of Assam, in a desire to maintain intact that age-old relationship and alliance, offered his daughter, Mang-Tyep-Khan alias Chao-Sing, with valuable presents to Hso-Klen-Mong who admitted her into his palace after formally marrying her according to the Tai-Ahom custom of Chaklong. This Shan Princess was unsurpassed in beauty and scholarship in Tai in the Ahom Court and it was at her suggestion that the city of Garhgaon was fortified with strong ramparts all round.²⁰⁵ The Chronicle also says that it was at her instance again that Hso-Klen-Mong created the office of a third minister called Barpatra.²⁰⁶ But the office of the Shenglung, otherwise called Barpatra or Rajmantri, existed

²⁰⁴ AB, p.81 ; DAB, ibid.

²⁰⁵ AB - 'SMJC', pp.31-32. Some of these ramparts still exist in a rectangular form. There were inner walls and outer ramparts with moats.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., p.32. See also AB, p.53.

as early as the fifteenth century A.D. before Hso-Hum-Mong became king. According to the Tai-Ahom Chronicle Hso-Han-Hpa (1488-1493) appointed Phun-Long-Kham-peng Bura-Gohain as Rajmantri in A.D. 1491. But Tamuli Phukan's Assam Buranjis (p.18) says with good reason that Phun-Long-Kham-peng was made Rajmantri by Hso-Pem-Hpa (1493-1497). Kham-peng is known to be the first Shenglung or Rajmantri from the extant Ahom Buranjis. Further all Buranjis say that the office of a third minister was created by Hso-Hum-Mong for Kan-Seng, who was also made Shenglung i.e. Barpatra or Rajmantri. Whatever the truth, there is no doubt that the Shan Princess of Hso-Kien-Mong exercised considerable influence on him in the matter of improving the defences and administration of the kingdom and the king invariably accepted her learned advice. Her learning and physical charms endeared her most to the king who never offended her even with strong words. It was during her time that a Nara astronomer visited the Ahom Court at Garhgeon who was received with honour and given a suitable lodge by the king who gave him the title of Sagar-Khari. This astronomer is said to have undertaken a census of the population of the province of Namrup.

In A.D. 1549 the Nagas of the village Banchang attacked the Nagas of Banpha (Banfera). The latter appealed to the Ahom king with an offer of a number of buffaloes, bisons (Methon) and hunting dogs for help. The king at once intervened in this inter-tribal feud in favour of the Banphas and despatched

the Bura-Gohain with a force to deal with the Banchangias and ordered General Lan-Chang to march to Mahang. The king himself moved on to Banrui where he made his camp. The Bura-Gohain attacked the Banchangias and defeated them and captured the Chief (Khunbao) Chaokingpong of the clan. The Naga Chief with the spoils of the expedition was presented before the king. The Chief surrendered and peace was restored in the Naga area.

In A.D. 1550 the Governor of Tima (i.e. Dima or Kachari province) died. In the same year died also Prince Hso-Teng, the Governor or Raja of Shairing, and a few other top-ranking officers. Hso-Klen-Mong died in A.D. 1552 as a result of protracted illness for one year leaving behind two sons. Among his public works the most important were the excavation of the Garhgaon tank, the construction of the Naga Ali which runs through the Cadhuli Bazar Mauza of Sibsagar from the Bar Ali to the Naga Hills and the embankments at Kahikuchi and Changinimukh.²⁰⁷ The earliest extant Ahom coins bear a date corresponding to A.D. 1543, and were struck by Hso-Klen-Mong.²⁰⁸

16. Hso-Kham-Hpa (1553-1603) :

On the death of Chao Hso-Klen-Mong his son Hso-Kham-Hpa ascended the throne of Assam in A.D. 1553. Earlier he was hurt in one of his legs while he journeyed on an elephant. As he walked with a slightly limping gait from its effect he was popularly known as Khura Raja.²⁰⁹ It is known from two

²⁰⁷ Gait : op.cit., pp.99; K.T.P. op.cit., pp.23-24.

²⁰⁸ Ibid, p.99 ; see also Catalogue of the Provincial Coin Cabinet, Assam ed. by A.W. Botham, vide sec. XXXIV, 2nd Ed. 1930. ²⁰⁹ K.T.P. op.cit., p.24.

manuscript records²¹⁰ that his chief queen Bar Mechlow of Assamese Buranjis or more properly Me Shao (or Assamese Gobharu) was the daughter of Ton-Kham Bar-Gohain and his Parbatia Kunwari, called Saru Mechlow (younger Me Shao) was the daughter of Leshang Gohain of Maduri. They were not the daughters of a Sonari (goldsmith) as described by Kashinath Tamuli Phukan (Assam Buranji, p.24). A daughter of a goldsmith named Kachan or Kachanmati was a female attendant of the chief queen Bar Mechlow and, after her death in A.D. 1577 (Lakni Rungkeo), of Haru Mechlow. When the latter died in A.D. 1579 the king was enamoured of her and took her as his queen and soon made her the chief queen. This young queen of non-royal origin exercised great influence on the king who married her in his advanced age. She having no son adopted a boy named Nahar as her son, but the latter was suspected to be actually her paramour whom she wanted to make the king's successor. She played the part of Princess Regent Sri Suda Chan of the Siamese Court who flourished in the same century. Nahar, who wanted to pose as a real prince, extracted from the queen the indulgence to construct a high road and a tank²¹¹ in his name. The road he made connected Mahang with Garhgaon and is called Nahar Ali and the tank was excavated near Barhat. He made a garden also called Naharbari in Jaypur. He also did many other things which amounted to usurpation of royal

²¹⁰ quoted by Shri Ardheswar Gogoi in his valuable article entitled Sonari Kunwari and Nahar to Natun Asamiya of 28 October 1958.

²¹¹ in Sibsagar, now known as Nahar Ali and Nahar Pukhuri.

authority. The queen also offended the nobles and ministers by false accusations against some of them and got the king's son and heir-apparent removed to Revati village on a got-up charge. Many were killed at her behest. The nobles of the Court took a serious view of Nahar's conduct and when it became extreme they with the king's permission put him to death at the principal gate of Garhgaon. The queen in grief then committed suicide. This unhappy series of events happened in the last part of the king's long reign.

Within a year of Hso-Kham-Mpa's accession a group of seven princes and Lapet, son of the Shenglung and Lashampeng, son of the reputed general Shenba rose in rebellion against him. The rebels were soon rounded up and put into prison but, on the intercession of Bar-Gohain Ton-Kham for mercy, were let off with necessary warnings. In A.D. 1559 they rebelled again, but this time they were all captured and executed.

Vishva Singha's Expedition To Assam :

From the first establishment of the Koch king Vishva Singha as tributary to Assam embassies had been regularly sent by him to the Ahom Court carrying annual tributes. But in a period of two decades he extended his conquests far and wide. He conquered a large part of Bhutan and was about to storm the capital when the Deva and Dharma Rajas sued for peace and agreed to pay tributes annually to the Koch monarch. It was also further agreed that the Deva Raja would help him with troops in times of war and the administration of affairs in

Bhutan would be carried on under his orders.²¹² The Khen dynasty ended with the death of Nilambar and the country of Kamata and Kamarupa was then split up into innumerable small areas which were ruled by petty Bhuyan chiefs most of whom were Brahmins. Vishva Singha subdued these Bhuyans right up to the eastern limits of Kamata-Kamarupa. One Pratap Rai, a powerful Bhuyan of Pandu, fled to the Ahom capital for refuge when Vishva Singha advanced to his district and conquered both South and North Kamarupa. The Darrang Raj Vansavali by Suryakhari gives an account of how the Bhuyans of Kamarupa were subdued by Vishva Singha.

Next he turned his arms towards Bengal when Selim Shah, son of Sher Shah, was the Emperor of Delhi, and Bengal, as an independent State, was under Muhammad Khan or Muhammad Shah (A.D. 1552-54) of the Sur tribe and a relation of the Emperor.²¹³ Vishva Singha reduced to submission the country of Gaur except perhaps the capital and annexed the western part of the modern Jalpaiguri district. He even settled at Bykunthapur (Jalpaiguri) in that district. He removed his capital from Mount Chikna to Hingulavasha on the plains and consolidated his kingdom and settled in it Brahmins from Mithila. K.L. Barua refers to Behula Unakhyan as saying that Vishva Singha became first known as the Lord of Kamata or Kamateswar and subsequently removed his capital to Koch Behar where he built

212 The Cooch Behar State : p.228.

213 Stewart : History of Bengal, ppl45-6 ; S.N. Bhattacharyya : op.cit., p.76.

a fine city. Thus being strong he neglected to send tributes to the Ahom king with former regularity and the latter wanted to know why it was so. Vishva Singha felt it to be a humiliation and just to remove this stigma of vassalage made preparations for war and sailed up the Brahmaputra as far as Singari-parbat in Darrang. But as the provisions were exhausted at that place he retreated with his army to his country Koch Behar without having any clash with the Ahoms.²¹⁴

Soon after that he fell ill and before his death he invited his sons to his bed-side and expressed his desire to annex the beautiful and prosperous country of Assam. Now as he was ill and had no hope of survival he asked his sons to conquer that country and remove the humiliation of being tributary to the Ahom king. He also selected his second son Naranarayan to succeed him and his third son Sukladhvaj alias Chilarai to be the commander-in-Chief of the Koch army. He directed his eldest son Narasingha to rule the hill country of Bhutan.²¹⁵ He died in A.D. 1554.²¹⁶ Naranarayan²¹⁷ ascended the throne in the year 45 Raja Saka (A.D. 1555). The eldest brother Narasingha or Nri Singha relinquished it being bound, it is said, by the words of his blessings namely,

214 H.S.B. : op.cit., pp.30-31.

215 Ibid. p.31. Narasingha was probably a Resident Prince to superintend and control the affairs of Bhutan under Deva Raja.

216 Vishva Singha is said to be still alive immersed in meditation (Yoga) in a mountain above Mt. Chikna. (see Yogini Tantra, Patal XIII, Sloka 170).

217 He was called also Malla Dev or Malla Narayan as he was physically very strong and a wrestler.

'you will be the queen-consort', offered earlier to Naranarayan's wife.²¹⁸ Pargana Panga, which forms part of the District of Rangpur, was set apart for his maintenance, and his family dwelt there. Both gold and silver coins were struck and issued by Maharaja Naranarayan and were called Narani or Narayani coins. These coins (Narayani Rupees) had on one side the name of Mahadeva, and on the other, the name of Sri Sri Maharaja Naranarayan, both in Deva-nagari character. A few of them, still preserved by the government, bear the date 1477 Sak or A.D. 1555 which shows that Naranarayan became king in that year. For according to the custom of the Koch Behar family nazars have to be given by the officers and subjects to the new king in coins so struck at his coronation.²¹⁹

Not long after his accession the Muslims of Gaur invaded the Koch territories and Naranarayan had to organize a large army composed of Koch and Bhutenese troops and also of Rajput, Mughul and Pathan mercenaries and send it with Sukladhvaj as the Commander-in-Chief against the aggressors. The Koch general defeated and drove off the Muslims as far as the Ganges.

Naranarayan also granted Brahmottar lands to many Brahmins under his seal of the Singha Chhapa. He and Sukladhvaj also rebuilt the temple of Kamakhya after its destruction by Kalapahar. Saktism was the State religion, but Vaishnavism was tolerated.

218 Rajopakhya, Part II, Chap. I, pp. 29-30 as quoted in The Cooch Behar State.

219 The Cooch Behar State, p. 230.

In A.D. 1555 an expedition was sent by the king with the Shairing Raja, the Bar-Gohain and the Bura-Gohain (Chao-Phuphrang) as generals against the Nagas of Hatikhok. One detachment led by the Shairing Raja and the Bar-Gohain (Thao-Monglung) advanced towards the Naga village called Iton. The Hatikhokia Nagas retreated by the Tilao (Lohit river) leaving behind their women and children and the Itonias fled to Papuk. The Ahom forces pursued them and reached Papuk. All Nagas fled into the interior area of Khamteng. In the meantime the Bar-Gohain fell ill and was carried back. The Nagas assembled at Khamteng and made an attack on the Bar-Gohain on the hill Tadaibungmung and captured him by killing his men. But two Ahom princes Chao Hso-Ban and Chao Sham-Chu with their troops speedily marched to the scene, fell upon the Nagas and put them to rout. The Bar-Gohain was freed and conveyed to the capital.²²⁰

New Appointments Of Ministers :

In A.D. 1557 the famous general Kan-Seng Barpatra-Gohain and the Bura-Gohain died. The king appointed Chao Aikhek as Bura-Gohain and Rajmantri under the title of Chao Shang-Rai and Kan-Seng's son Klen-Jang was made Barpatra-Gohain (Shenglung).²²¹

²²⁰ AB, pp.82-83 ; DAB, p.40.

²²¹ AB, p.83 ; DAB, p.40. Here Temuli Phukan's statement that Aikhek and Klen-Jang became Bura-Gohain and Barpatra-Gohain respectively during Hso-Klen-Mong's reign is evidently wrong and was a result of confusion. See his Assam Buranji, p.24.

After his accession Maharaja-Naranarayan of Koch Behar sent an embassy²²² to the Ahom Court at Garhgaon conveying the usual homage and goodwill, which had been the practice ever since Vishva Singha's installation as tributary to the Ahoms. But Naranarayan also communicated through the embassy his complaint that the Ahoms, in utter disregard of the old friendship between the two countries, had killed his brother Dip Singha when the latter with two other brothers had been on a pilgrimage to the east. The Bura-Gohain Ai-Khek, who was asked by the king to receive the ambassadors, not only found fault with the latter's etiquette, but also made very adverse comments on the manners and customs of the Koches in reply to a few questions asked by one of the ambassadors. Further he told them with a firm tone that if they maintained the friendship ignoring such incidents among Kahatriyas it would be to their good. This was the first cause of tension between the Koches and the Ahoms.

Aola Bhuyan's Invasion :

One Aola Bhuyan,²²³ probably a Bhuyan chief earlier removed from the Kapili valley to Sibsagar by Hso-Klen-Mong, escaped to the Bhuyan country down beyond the territory of the Ahom kingdom and planned with another chief, said to be a grandson of Pratap Rai, for the invasion of that kingdom.

222 AB - 'SMJC', p.34-36. The members of the embassy were four, namely, Udbhanda Chauliya, Shyamrai Chauliya, Kalketu Sardar and Dhama Sardar, who were accompanied by 22 Dhekeris. The embassy carried a letter from the Koch Raja and presents to the Ahom Court.

223 Aluya Bhuyan of DAB (pp.40-41) ; AB, p.84.

They sailed upstream the Brahmaputra in A.D. 1560 with a force as far as Dikhaumukh where they made their encampment. An Ahom army led by the Bar-Gohain Ton-Kham, Bura-Gohain Chao Shang-Rai and Klan-Jang Barpatra-Gohain made a fierce attack on the invaders at that place and completely defeated them. Thereafter the king constructed a fort with strong ramparts at Buka (present Bukakhat in the Golaghat Sub-Division) to the west of the Dhansiri and also strengthened the defences of Sala.

First Invasions of Assam by Tepu :

Tepu was some chief or general under the Koch king Naranarayan. He made repeated incursions into the Ahom territories between A.D. 1562 and 1571. The first incursion was a reply to an accusation made by the Ahoms that the Koches had been raiding villages in violation of the Ahom territory in the course of their operations against the Kacharis.²²⁴ Thus in A.D. 1562 a Koch army under Tepu proceeded with a fleet of boats up the Brahmaputra reaching first Sala and then Dikhaumukh. When this report reached the capital the Shairing Raja, the Bar-Gohain Ton-Kham, Bura-Gohain Ai-Khek²²⁵ and Barpatra-Gohain Klan-Jang marched with a force to fight the enemy. After a brief engagement in which some men of the Ahom force were killed by the enemy's bullets the latter retreated to the north bank and encamped at Harhimukh in the present North Lakhimpur Sub-Division. A detachment of the Ahoms pursued them right ^{down} to that place. There was

²²⁴ DAB, p.42 ; also Gait : op.cit. p.100.

²²⁵ He is more known by this name than Chao Shang-Rai.

an engagement at Harhimukh in which the Ahoms were worsted and a number of their officers were killed. The Chronicle makes no mention of any of the chief Ahom generals having gone over to Harhimukh. Tepu returned to his country without any tangible success.

Koch Invasion Of Assam :

When the Koch embassy returned from the Ahom Court and submitted its report on the imperious attitude of the Ahom minister in dealing with it Narannarayan decided upon the conquest of Saumar, which was Eastern Assam forming the Ahom kingdom at that time. Narannarayan is said to have taken this decision after having ruled for about five years,²²⁶ that is A.D. 1560 which also indicates the date of the embassy's visit to Garhgaon, the Ahom capital. The Koch king then directed his brother Gohain Kamala to construct a road just south of the Bhutan boundary and north of the Ahom territories all along the north bank of the Brahmaputra for the Koch army to march. The road was constructed by levelling the high and low lands and, when the work was completed, it stretched from Behar to Narayanpur in Habung in the present North Lakhimpur Sub-Division.²²⁷ According to Sri Sri Svarganarayandev Maharajar Janma Charitra (in AB - 'SMJC', p.36) the road passing by the side of Juria reached as far as the great Dhal river near the Kumatiya which forms the eastern boundary of the North Lakhimpur Sub-Division. It seems the road ran mostly through

²²⁶ K.L.Barua, op.cit., p.292.

²²⁷ Kamrupar Buranji, p.12.

uninhabited areas of those days and was completed in about two years' time. Further it must have been constructed in an unspectacular manner and without any fuss or demonstration of enmity towards the Ahoms, otherwise the whole project would have been nipped in the bud by the latter. When by the end of 1562 the army and the road were ready, both Naranarayan and Chilarai²²⁸ started with a large army²²⁹ for invading the Ahom kingdom. All the Bhuyans joined them and, in addition, the Koch king secured the collaboration of the Bhutanese and the Dapblas who supplied him with large ^{re-}inforcements. The vast combined army headed by the renowned Koch general Chilarai moved forward along the newly built road, which was called Cohain Kemelar Ali, and reached Narayanpur on the north bank in the Sub-Division of North Lakhimpur where the local Brahmin Bhuyan presented an elephant to Naranarayan and joined him against the Ahoms. Then they all advanced to Chinatali and made their camp near Juria in the Habung country.²³⁰

At the approach of the Koch army the Habung Brahmins, who knew the Koch royal family to be most pious and respectful to Brahmins, rode on cows by prominently exhibiting the sacred lines on their foreheads and raising the sacred threads up on their

228 AB - 'SMJC', p.38 ; AB, (p.85) mentions 'the Koch king invading our country' in Sakni Mungrao i.e.A.D. 1563. K.L. Barua says that according to the Darrang Raj Vansavali also the Koch army was led by Naranarayan and his brother Sukladhvaj. It is said that Chilarai had patches of leucoderma throughout his whole body for which he was called Sukladhvaj, but they all vanished except in the navel on his dedicating a math for the installation of the god Sree Suryya. See AB - 'SMJC', p.38.

229 According to AB - 'SMJC', (p.36) 600,000 men, which, if it means the regular army, appears to be an exaggerated figure.

230 AB - 'SMJC', pp.38-39.

ears in order to save their lives from the invaders. Many Sudras also made a similar demonstration in imitation of the Brahmins to escape from the enemy's attacks.²³¹ Some accounts say that knowing the sentiments of the Hinduized Koch Princes who would never shed Brahmin blood the Ahom king sent forward an army of Sudras dressed as Brahmins and riding on cows. Seeing the Brahmin army before him Chilarai retreated without striking. But later, learning that he had been outwitted by the Ahoms by a false device, Chilarai marched again in A.D. 1563 with a large force against them.²³² He crossed to the south bank of the Dihing (the Brahmaputra) from Habung opposite Dikhaumukh and fought and drove the Ahoms back in a series of engagements for seven days. Chaoring Aikhring was the Ahom Commander-in-Chief appointed by the king and was ordered to defend the fort at the mouth of the Sessa river which falls into the Buri Dihing not far from the Brahmaputra. With him was placed the Tipam Raja Hso-Leng (or Hso-Reng) who was the king's uncle and named by the Hindus Deo Raja and by the Deodhais Phichao.²³³ He had soon to come down to oppose the enemy.

As a warrior he was as powerful as his adversary Chilarai whose further advance he effectively checked. But when one day during this campaign the Deo Raja put off his amulet for bathing it was snatched away by a kite and dropped amidst Chilarai's army. Considering it to be a curse of God he left the campaign and proceeded to Shairing (Saring), his old demesne.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, p.39.

²³² K.T.P. : *op.cit.*, p.25 ; H.S.B. : *op.cit.*, p.32.

²³³ *AB*, p.26. Hso-Leng, second son of Hso-Kum-Mong, was first Shairing Raja and afterwards Tipam Raja under Hso-Klen-Mong. The youngest brother Prince Hso-Khring was called Dop Raja by the

where he made a grave and voluntarily entered it with his followers.²³⁴ The grave still stands and is called Deo Raja Maidam. His disappearance from the battle-field cleared the way for Chilarai who then pushed forward to Mechagarh and encamped there with Naranarayan in the month of April in 1563. The place is said to have been named Mechagarh from the bent (mecha) roof of the camp house that Chilarai built at it. It is also said that the Koches excavated a tank there with spears and bow ends.²³⁵

In the meantime the province of Marangi was devastated by the Koches after overrunning the Kachari territory. Another Koch army under General Tepu advanced up the Brahmaputra to attack the strategic Ahom fort at Dihing. Hso-Kham-Hpa sent couriers to communicate his stern orders to its garrison not to leave the fort on any account. But before the couriers could reach the place the garrison deserted the fort under enemy pressure and retreated to Abhoipur.

These reverses coupled with the encampment of the powerful Koches in the vicinity made it untenable for Hso-Kham-Hpa to continue any longer in the capital and so he left it with all his officers and armed forces for the Nam-Chin Hill, from where he entered the Naga Hill for refuge and stayed at Klang-doi Hill for three months.²³⁶ The king's absence demoralized the

²³⁴ K.T.P. : p.26.

²³⁵ AB - 'SMJC', p.39. This does not appear to be the main tank called Mechagarh Pukhuri, for that the latter was excavated by Hso-Haeng-Hpa (Pratap Singha) and dedicated to the God of Heaven (Lengdon) by sacrificing buffaloes and cows according to Ahom customs is described in the same Buranji. (See p.61).

²³⁶ AB, p.87. It is said the Ahom king caused an iron goat to be made and sent to Naranarayan saying that if he could sever the head by one stroke he should have his kingdom. When Naranarayan succeeded with a sharp sword to sever it, the king

population of the undefended capital with the result that many people including a prince called Tamul-Nukhura Gohain went over to the Koches, who also received supplies for the army. The prince was treated as a brother by Naranarayan and was honoured with presents. The Bhuyans, who were under the control of the Ahoms, immediately sided with the Koches against the Ahoms. Garhgaon itself was occupied by the victorious Koches.

There was thus a collapse of the defences on all fronts. Hence the king in his hill refuge held a council of the officers and generals and decided to make peace overtures with the Koch king. Hso-Khan-Hpa then deputed as envoy Chao-Phuphrang Ai-Khek²³⁷ with valuable presents consisting of gold and silver vessels and a jar to meet Raja Naranarayan, who was then at Majuli, and negotiate for peace. The result of the peace talks was that the Koch Raja agreed to go back if hostages named by him be given by 'the Udaygiri Raja' (the king of the East by which the Ahom king was meant) as also the best elephant named Khamring and the swiftest horse Pakshirai possessed by him. Unable to resist the Koch power the Ahom king yielded to the demand. Among the hostages were the three sons of the three Gohains, and the Bar-Gohain Ton-Kham's nephew named Apasu Gohain alias Sundar Gohain.²³⁸ The Bar-Gohain's son Chaopet was brought

²³⁷ mention of Chao-Phuphrang (Bura-Gohain) Ai-Klek here in the Tai-Ahom text, contrary to the account in AB - 'SMJC', (p.36), shows that he was in office till after this great Koch invasion. There is no reason to doubt it as his name is specifically mentioned as an envoy who was alone entrusted with the responsibility of negotiating peace with the Koch king.

²³⁸ K.T.P.: p.26. Apasu means ugly, but actually he was most handsome for which he was referred to as Sundar Gohain by the people of Koch Behar and since then he became known by the latter name. In some Buranjis Apasu is distorted into Akasu.

from Tiru, but he was accompanied by his mother, Chaoshao Nangbu,²³⁹ who was the daughter of the late great sovereign Hso-Hum-Mong and aunt of Chao Hso-Khan-Hpa. She protested against her son being sent to the down country, Koch Behar. She severely reprimanded the king and her husband for acknowledging defeat at the hands of the Koches who should not have been any match for them and demanded the general's uniform to fight the enemy. Referring to the king she said 'Why should he reign when he is unable to save his subjects from the enemies'. She then wrenched her son away with the remark 'My son can be offered as a hostage only when the current of the river Bikhau can be reversed'. The king and the nobles, because of their moral weaknesses, dared not interfere with the action of this respected and energetic lady. The king then ordered his brother Prince Hso-Gam to go in place of Chaopet.²⁴⁰ The Bura-Gohain presented to the Koch King at the latter's Majuli camp the hostages, of whom Apasu Gohain was the chief, and also the five cubits high elephant Khamring and the horse Pakahiral as demanded. At a test fight the five-cubit Khamring defeated Chilarai's elephant Sukladhvaj famous for its height of seven cubits.²⁴¹ Khamring was then returned to the Ahom king.

The great consequence of this war was, as Gait points out in his Koch Kings of Kamarupa, that the Ahom king agreed to acknowledge himself a feudatory of Naranarayan. In that year of

239 Chaoshao is gabharudeo in Assamese, a respectable term of address applied to the wife of an Ahom of high descent, usually a Gohain. Nang, lady, woman, bu, a lotus. In DAB, the name is Nangblek, blek meaning a flower, which appears to be the translator's or copyist's distortion of the original.

240 AB, p. 87-88 ; DAB, p. 44.

241 AB - 'SMJC', p. 40.

Koch victory, records the Tai-Ahom Chronicle, all the tributes were paid to the Koch king.²⁴² Three officers named Ujir Baman, Tapasvi Laskar and Mahamulya Laskar were also appointed by the Koch king as governors (Rajkbawas) of the provinces near the river Brahmaputra on the north bank.²⁴³

Having subjugated Assam Haranarayan marched back with the hostages. But Chilarai, with the intention of proceeding to Hidimba, forced a large number of men of Assam skilled in crafts to accompany him. This unfriendly act of Chilarai after the settlement of peace not only displeased the Ahom authorities but also undermined their confidence in the Koch king.²⁴⁴ Both Haranarayan and Chilarai first proceeded to ^(probably Marangi) Morang and thence to Demera. For the Demeria (or Dimerua) Chief Pantiswar sought the protection of Haranarayan against the depredations of the Kacharis and became tributary to him. Haranarayan and Chilarai reduced to submission the Kachari Raja of Hidimba and the Raja of Manipur without a war, but fought and killed the Rajas of Joranta, Tippera and Sylhet.²⁴⁵ Virryavanta, the Chief of Khairam,²⁴⁶ voluntarily submitted when he heard of Haranarayan's prowess and sought permission to mint coins in his name. But Haranarayan said 'stamp coins in my name only, not in your name' and, when the Chief agreed he presented him with a mint of his own for the purpose.²⁴⁷ The coins minted were of silver. It is an instance of how Narayani coins circulated in countries outside

242 AB, p. 88.

243 DAS, p. 44 ; AB, p. 88.

244 AB - 'SMJC', p. 40.

245 Gait : op. cit., p. 53 ; AB - 'SMJC', p. 40 ; KB, p. 12.

246 Raja of Khairam is said to be a Garo in Kamrupar Buzanji, p. 12. But the present Khasis were also sometimes referred to in some Buzanjis as Garos. The reason is not known.

247 AB - 'SMJC' : p. 40 ; KB - p. 12.

Koch Behar proper. It seems they were current sometime or other in all the Koch dominions. After conquering the hill States and subduing the petty chiefs of the south bank and settling the tributes to be paid by them Naranarayan and Chilarai crossed the Lohitya (the Brahmaputra) to the north bank from Pandu in Gauhati. Finding the bracelet-like bend of the river at Hajo they ordered their men to excavate a straight canal connecting the two ends of the great bend which they did with their spears, swords and digging tools. The main current of the river then took the course of the canal and the Hajo current shrivelled up into a rill.²⁴⁸ Both the brothers then went to Koch Behar crossing the Lohitya at Karoibari.

Naranarayan was not allowed to reign in peace by the Muslims who made repeated incursions into the Koch territories. According to Stewart in A.D. 1569 Soliman Shah Kerany, Sultan of Bengal, invaded and plundered Koch Behar.²⁴⁹ Again in A.D. 1578 one Hossein Kooly Khan²⁵⁰ is said to have forced the Raja of Koch Behar to pay tribute and acknowledge himself as a vassal of the Mughul Empire.²⁵¹ In some Buranjis it is said that sometime after the Assam campaign the Koch Raja proceeded to fight against Gaur (called also Bare Bangala) but the Koches were defeated and Chilarai taken prisoner and

²⁴⁸ AB, 'SMJC', p.40.

²⁴⁹ Stewart : History of Bengal, p.150. It is well-known that the Kararani Sultans of Bengal ruled from A.D. 1564 to 1576. Sulaiman Kararani, Governor of South Bihar, who acknowledged the suzerainty of Akbar, was also the Sultan of Bengal in A.D. 1572. He must have therefore led his expedition against Koch Behar when Taj Khan Kararani (1564-72) was the ruler of Bengal with capital in Gaur. Sulaiman is said to have removed his capital from Gaur to Tanda in U.P.

²⁵⁰ to be distinguished from Husain Guli Khan, a contemporary of Siraj-ud-daulah.

kept in captivity by the king of Gaur.²⁵² The king, who so defeated the Koches and captured their Commander-in-Chief, was probably Soliman Shah Kerany (or Sulaiman Kararani) who, after devastating some of the Koch territories, besieged the capital itself and would have destroyed it had he not to abandon it and proceed to put down an insurrection in Orissa. The Koch power of fighting greatly diminished when their redoubtable general Chilarai was removed from the scene and Narayanarayan passed his days in great anxieties. Having passed about one year in captivity without any hope of early release and apprehending an invasion of the Koch kingdom by the Ahoms at any moment Chilarai sent a message to Narayanarayan advising the latter to send back the Ahom hostages and to promote friendship with Assam at this hour of adversity.²⁵³ In appreciation of this prudent suggestion Narayanarayan decided to release the hostages, but without betraying his real weaknesses. He therefore hit upon a plan and invited Sundar Gohain to a game of dice betting that if the latter could win all the hostages would be released. Sundar won by nineteen to twenty. Narayanarayan then rewarded him for his success and allowed the hostages to return to their country sending with them a number of men of his own country, mostly artisans, such as goldsmiths. When they reached Garhgaon these men from Koch Behar were settled in a particular area called thenceforth Bhatiapar and the goldsmiths and blacksmiths who came with them became known as Bhatia Sonari and Bhatia Kamar.²⁵⁴

252 AB - 'SMJC', p.41 ; KB, 12. This Koch-Muslim war is omitted in the Tai-Ahom Chronicle.

253 AB - 'SMJC', pp.42, 45.

At Gaur Chilarai is said to have cured the Padshah's mother, who was about to die from snake-bite. Since then Chilarai became a great favourite of the Padshah's family and was even married there and entrusted with certain responsible functions of the Court. Meanwhile Naranarayan advanced with a force to release him. According to the account in the Sri Sri Svarganarayander Maharajar Janma Charitra Chilarai, who had a secret understanding with Naranarayan, obtained the Padshah's permission to take his army under a false pretence to fight his brother the Koch king, who had deprived him of his share of the kingdom. Chilarai thus led the Padshah's army away and joined his brother. Both then attacked and subjugated Gaur and the Padsha fled from the capital. Thereafter Chilarai was referred to by the title of Sangram Singha.²⁵⁵ If this story can be trusted then this Koch conquest of Gaur must have been the real cause why Sulaiman Kararani had to transfer his capital from Gaur to Tanda in the present Uttar Pradesh whatever other excuses for it might be cited.

In the Chronicle Sri Sri Svarganarayan Maharajar Janma Charitra it is indicated that by the time Chilarai sent the message to Naranarayan from his prison at Gaur advising the latter to release the Ahom hostages Hso-Kham-Hpa had died and Hso-Shen-Hpa (Pratap Singha) ascended the throne at Garhgaon. But it cannot be reconciled with the date of Hso-Kham-Hpa's death, that is, A.D. 1603, and Naranarayan's period of reign which was from Raja Saka 45 to 73 corresponding to A.D. 1555-1587.

²⁵⁵ Ibid., p.43.

If Chilarai was in captivity at Gaur from A.D. 1569 to 1570 when he sent his message, then the hostages must have been released by A.D. 1571 at the latest, when in the Ahom kingdom Hso-Kham-Hpa was ruling and not Hso-Shen-Hpa who ascended the throne in A.D. 1603.

Both the Ahoms and the Koches had been friendly nations since the time of Vishva Singha and the latter owed a great deal to the sacrifice of the Ahoms in founding his greatness. The Ahoms never contemplated any invasion of the Koch territories even when Narayanarayan neglected to pay his tributes fully and regularly. There was nothing to displease the Koch king except a few castigating replies given by a minister of the Ahom Court to an improper and irrelevant set of questions asked by the Koch ambassadors. The common enemies of both the Koches and the Ahoms were the Muslims who had already established their domination in the neighbouring country of Gaur and had shown what they could do by the devastations carried out in Nilambar's Kamata. Narayanarayan and Chilarai being elated by Vishva Singha's temporary conquests of parts of Gaur thought themselves too strong for their Muslim neighbours and so started for breaking the power of the Ahoms in the east. The Koch-Ahom combined strength, which had served as a bulwark against the steadily growing Muslim menace, was disrupted by Narayanarayan's short-sighted policy and it was not too long for him to reap the consequences of this political miscalculation when the fearful impact of Muslim expansion overwhelmed the Koch kingdom in the years that followed leading to the break-down of its power in the very next generation.

Lesser Invasions :

During the period from A.D. 1564 to A.D. 1566 there were a number of lesser invasions of the Ahom territories. First the Chutiyas started their predatory activities in Namruk and Kheram which had to be dealt with. At the same time, a Dhekeri Raja named Paman or Pavan invaded the Ahom territories on the north bank. Hso-Kham-Hpa sent, among others, the Bura-Gohain, the Barpatra-Gohain and the Sadiyakhwa-Gohain against him. In the battle of Murabhaga (or Moorabagor), a place famous for a temple of Kamakhya,²⁵⁶ a great number of enemies fell dead and the Dhekeri Raja fled on an elephant. Being chased by the Ahoms he fled away on a horse leaving the elephant, horses and guns and then sailed down to his country. All the animals and war weapons that he had left behind were collected by the Ahoms. Another chieftain called Dhela Raja invaded the Ahom territory but he was captured. Tepu again appeared in A.D. 1565 as an invader, but was defeated with heavy losses. The Ahoms gained many war-boats, guns and other things belonging to the enemy. The Thaomung Bongen (the Sadiyakhwa-Gohain) died in A.D. 1570. In A.D. 1571 another chieftain, Bhitarual, and Tepu sailed up the Brahmaputra to the mouth of the Nam-Tima (the Dhansiri) to attack the Ahom territory. The king, with the Shairing Raja and his three ministers, fell upon them killing innumerable Koch soldiers and forcing the rest with their chiefs to retire hastily. The Ahoms gathered large boats, guns and other weapons

²⁵⁶ Wade says that this temple is greatly frequented by the mountaineers as well as by the inhabitants of Upper Assam. See His Geographical Sketch of Assam, p.13, appended to Account

left behind by the enemies. Then two Nagas named Pungbang and Pungkhū created trouble, but they were soon captured and brought to the king. In A.D. 1572 the king was capturing elephants at the mouth of the river Tibang (the Dibong). This might have caused a friction with the local Chutiyas, referred to as Matakas also. The Saring Raja and the Sadiyakhwa-Gohain proceeded with a force to fight with their Senapati (chieftain), but as the Ahom force approached the latter fled to Kanchai. The Nagas of Iton again revolted in 1573, but were put down after defeating them at Kheram. In A.D. 1574 there was an epidemic of small-pox throughout the country which took a heavy toll of life.

Nora Expedition :

In the beginning of Lakni Khutmit or A.D. 1575 the Nora Raja, referred to also by the people of Assam as the king of the East, fled to Kham-Jang (or Kham-Yang) as the Burmese invaded his country and devastated it.²⁵⁷ The Nora Raja mentioned in the Tai-Ahom Chronicle was the Mogaung Sawbwa Sao-Kaa-Hpa II (1564-83) who waged the most formidable war against the greatest Burmese conqueror and king Bayin-Naung (1551-81) of the Toungoo dynasty who was crowned at Pegu with the greatest ceremonial. Mogaung was already conquered by an army despatched by Bayin-Naung in A.D. 1556 (Shan Lakli-Rungmaw 28) and made its Sawbwa Sao-Sui-Kwei a tributary chief.²⁵⁸

²⁵⁷ DAB, p.48 ; AB, p.92.

²⁵⁸ Ney Elias : op.cit., pp.42-43. See also for dates his Table of Mogaung Tseubwas.

At the time the Nora Raja made his camp at Kham-Jang being driven away from his kingdom by the Burmese, the Bar-Gohain Ton-Kham, the Bura-Gohain and the Barpatra-Gohain were busy constructing the fort (garh) of Pangrao (Pengerā). Hence Hso-Klen-Hpa sent with some other officers one thousand gold mohurs to the helpless fugitive Raja of Nora.²⁵⁹ He also asked for the sister of the Nora Raja in marriage and sent for the bride customary presents with those officers. The Nora Raja favourably responded and sent his sister with a dowry of elephants, horses, attendants and other things. A few days after that the Nora Raja further retreated towards Assam and came to Iton where he halted.²⁶⁰

The very next year (1576) Hso-Kham-Hpa sent his emissaries to contact the Nora Raja's daughter, Princess Jesuk,²⁶¹ and persuade her to come over to his palace at Garhgaon. Coming to know of this secret and scandalous communication at the instance of the Ahom king, who ^{had} married his sister only a year back, the Nora Raja was extremely offended as such a connection was unprecedented in the history of the family and, in rage, captured and severed with an axe the chests of two of the emissaries who visited his place with such an evil purpose and gave over their livers to crows and kites, the third having escaped to inform the king of the action taken by the Nora Raja.²⁶² As an immediate sequel to this rupture with the king of Assam 'the king of the East' (Nora Raja) invaded the latter's territory and

259 AB, p.92.

261 DAB, p.49 ; AB - 'SMJC', p.37.

262 DAB, p.49.

260 DAB, p.48 ; AB, p.93.

devastated the districts of Ruram, Kheram and Namrup killing the son of Chaolung Ruram.

According to the Tai-Ahom texts and the Deochai Asam Buranji Hso-Kham-Hpa sent an army with the Tipam Raja, Shairing Raja and the three ministers leading its different units against the Nora Raja. The Bar-Gohain, the Barpatra-Gohain, the Tipam Raja and Chao Rurum advanced along the right bank of the Sessa river and the Bura-Gohain advanced along the left bank and the Shairing Raja proceeded direct on an elephant named Pangri. The enemies rushed out of their fort and attacked the Shairing Raja, who being unable to resist the onslaught fell back and dashed into the Sessa river with all his men. On the flank Ai-Khek Bura-Gohain was killed and a number of other Ahom officers also fell. But General Ton-Kham Bar-Gohain delivered such a powerful assault from the right on the side of the Dihing that the enemies were defeated with heavy losses and the Nora Raja fled to the hills.²⁶³ After this the Nora Raja submitted and handed over his daughter, Jesuk, to General Ton-Kham for the Ahom king and also surrendered, among others, his own sword and the head-dress in lieu of his person being captured and taken to Garhgaon.²⁶⁴ Hso-Kham-Hpa at first charged Ton-Kham for not capturing the Nora Raja, who had fallen into his clutches, but was pleased to have the princess and excused the veteran general.

²⁶³ AB, p.93 ; DAB, pp.49-50.

²⁶⁴ AB - 'SMJC', p.37.

Koch Princess For Hso-Kham-Hpa :

In Lakni Flekshinga or A.D. 1584, the Koch king (called also Dhekeri Raja), who must have been Naranarayan, sent an embassy consisting of Bhuvan Guru and Sri Sula Laskar to Hso-Kham-Hpa with a proposal to offer his sister, Princess Chandkala, to him. It might have been the result of a belated realization, on the part of the Koch king, of the mounting Muslim danger from the west. The Ahom king reciprocated this gesture of friendship with a warm heart by sending as presents to the Koch Raja two elephants, two horses and envoys to settle the marriage. Soon after this the Ahom king sent in two trips several times more elephants and horses to the Koch Raja.

In Lakni Katmut (i.e. 1585), by a previous arrangement, the Koch Princess was escorted by the Bar-Gohain, the Bura-Gohain and the Barpatra-Gohain to Garhgaon. Hso-Kham-Hpa with great regard for the Koch royalty named her Kham (gold) or Mang-Hung.

Between A.D. 1587 and 1593 the chief queen, the Parbatia Kuanri and the Raidangia Kuanri of the king died.²⁶⁵

Hso-Kham-Hpa's Nominee As Mong-Kawng Sawbwa :

In the Deodhai Asam Buranji there is a significant reference to the installation of a king (Saobwa), named Hso-Ben, at Mong-Kawng (Mogaung) by Hso-Kham-Hpa in Lakni Taomit or A.D. 1588. According to Ney Elias's account Chau-Sui-Kwei (Sao-Sui-Kwei) was

²⁶⁵ AB, p.94 ; DAB, pp.50-51.

surnamed Chau-peng which may well be Hso-Ben in the Assam Chronicle, but Chau-Sui-Kwei's period of rule is A.D. 1526-58. The only possible Sawbwa who may be Hso-Ben was Chau-Hum-Hpa (1591-1605) of Ney Elias who established his capital at New Mogaung and was temporarily independent of Burma. Probably Chau-Hum-Hpa, too, was surnamed Chau-peng or Hso-Ben and was the grandson of Sao-Kae-Hpa. But a statement in the Buranji indicates that Hso-Ben was neither a brother nor a son of the Nora Raja. In that case Hso-Ben must have ruled between the reigns of Sao-Kon-Kham and Sao-Hum-Hpa, but is missing in Ney Elias's Table of Mogaung Tasubwas.

Locusts and Great Earthquake Of 1596 :

Hso-Kham-Hpa's
During ~~xxx~~ reign there was a great destruction of plants by locusts coming from the west.²⁶⁶ There was also a great earthquake in A.D. 1596. Hot water, sands, lavas and pebbles burst out from the interior of the earth all over the country.²⁶⁷

Hso-Kham-Hpa died in the spring of A.D. 1603. One account says that he was unable to eat for a disease in the mouth and died.²⁶⁸

17. Hso-Hseng-Hpa (1603-1641) :

On the death of Hso-Kham-Hpa in A.D. 1603 his ministers Ton-Kham Bar-Gohain, Chaoyet Bura-Gohain and Ban-Jangi Barpatra-

266 AB - 'SMJC', p. 41.

267 AB, p. 94 ; DAB, p. 51.

268 AB - 'SMJC', p. 43.

Gohain with the co-operation of Lesham Phukan and other nobles brought in, as desired by the deceased king, his son Langi Gohain and placed him on the throne in the same year.²⁶⁹ On his accession this Prince assumed the title of Hso-Hseng-Hpa. He was called by the Hindus Prachanda Singha or Pratap Singha.²⁷⁰ He was also nicknamed Burha Raja for his accession at an advanced age.²⁷¹ He was a king who possessed exceptional wisdom and intelligence and hence was called by the Hindus Buddhi Svarganarayan.²⁷²

One of the first acts of Hso-Hseng-Hpa after he became king was to catch elephants at Laikha (Laikhat) in A.D. 1605.²⁷³ At a later date he developed the ambition to earn the title of Gajapati by possessing one thousand elephants. He wanted to create a city of elephants to be named Gajpur after Hastinapur of the Bengals. He actually founded a city called Gajpur in which he collected the elephants though their number did not quite reach one thousand. He also excavated a tank called Rupahi in this city and constructed a road connecting the city with Garhgaon.²⁷⁴

Jayanta Princess For Ahom King :
Its Political Significance :

Raja Dhanamanik of the Hill State of Jayanta²⁷⁵ offended

²⁶⁹ AB - 'SMJG', p. 44.

²⁷⁰ DAB, p. 51.

²⁷¹ K.T.P. : op.cit., p. 27.

²⁷² Ibid.

²⁷³ AB, p. 95 ; DAB, p. 51.

²⁷⁴ AB - 'SMJG', p. 67.

²⁷⁵ Jayantiya in modern Assamese. The kingdom of Jayanta included a plains tract to the south of the Jayantiya Hills proper. The plains country extended as far as the Surma river and was first called Jayanta. The inhabitants of Jayantiya country are known as Svntengs who constitute a cognate branch of the Khasis.

the Kachari Raja by taking Prabhakar, the Chief of Dimarua, captive. But the Kachari Raja Jashanarayan,²⁷⁶ supposed to be a descendant of Nirbhoynarayan, demanded Prabhakar as a conspirator and enemy.²⁷⁷ The Jayanta Raja expressed his inability to release him as he had to pay arrears of revenue for lands long enjoyed by him. Whether Prabhakar was given shelter by the Jayanta Raja with the above plea against the Kachari Raja is not very clear from the text of the Chronicle. But it gave enough excuse to Jashanarayan to invade Jayanta. Unable to resist the Kacharis the Jayanta Raja fled to the hills from where he made peace overtures with the Kachari Raja. The latter demanded tributes and hostages in the persons of Dhanamanik's elder sister Muktarani, his nephew and Muktarani's son Jashamanik and Amarsena. In the greater interest of his country Dhanamanik accepted the peace terms and sent the tributes and the hostages as demanded. Probably the Jayanta Raja himself was taken captive and brutally treated by the Kachari Raja. Since then Jayanta became a vassal State of the Kacharis. Jashanarayan, it is said, assumed the title of Arimardan after subjugating the Jayanta king and also changed the name of his capital into Khāspur in commemoration of his victory over the Khasi.

²⁷⁶ Nirbhoynarayan, who was set up as the tributary Raja of the Kachari kingdom by Hso-Hum-Mong, was succeeded by Durlabhnarayan and Meghanarayan one after another and all these rulers maintained good relations with the Ahoms. Jashanarayan, who was a contemporary of Hso-Hseng-Hpa, seems to be the successor of Meghanarayan. See KB, pp.20-21.

²⁷⁷ AB - SMJC, p.48.

Raja.²⁷⁸ After sometime, Dhanamanik died and Jashanarayan placed Jashamanik on the throne of Jayanta and permitted Muktarani to accompany her son to Jayantapur, the capital of the kingdom. Amarsena remained in the Kachari capital at Maibang.²⁷⁹ In one account it is also said that Dhanamanik offered his daughter Sandhyavali with a dowry to Jashanarayan.²⁸⁰

But Jashamanik was soon disgusted with the Kachari domination. He had also the bitter memories of the devastations of his kingdom and of the treatment meted out to his father Dhanamanik by the Kachari king still green. He therefore decided to make an alliance with the more powerful Ahoms and with that purpose sent an embassy²⁸¹ to the Ahom king seeking his protection against the Kacharis.²⁸² When he found the Ahom king's attitude favourable he proposed to offer his daughter²⁸³ to him ^{with a} dowry. Chao Hso-Hseng-Ipa accepted the offer and sent his envoy²⁸⁴

²⁸⁷ Jayantia Buranji (p.11) says 'The Jayanta Raja (Dhanamanik) was captured and taken away and castrated naming him thereafter 'Khasi and was then sent back'. This means that the term 'Khasi' came to be applied to the Khasis from that time and the town in which the Jayanta Raja was castrated became thenceforth known as Khaspur which is very close to Maibang. The Khas people of southern Yun-nan and the Khas tribe mentioned in ancient Indian literature are not known to have any connection with the Khasis of Assam. Jayanta or Jayantiya is a Hinduized term by which the Syntengs are meant.

²⁷⁹ AB - 'SMJC', pp.48-49 ; KB, p.21 ; JB, p.13.

²⁸⁰ JB, p.13.

²⁸¹ Rup Rai and Pu Rai are mentioned as the Jayanta ambassadors. See JB, p.21.

²⁸² KB, p.21.

²⁸³ Ibid, p.23.

²⁸⁴ Damodar Kataki. See JB, p.14. But according to AB, - 'SMJC' , (p.49) the envoy's name is Sonabar.

to Jayantapur with the customary clothes and ornaments (Juran) for the bride. Jashamanik saw in this friendship an opportunity to bring about a clash between the Ahoms and the Kacharis so that the latter might be crushed. He therefore requested the Svarga Maharaja Chao Hso-Hseng-Hpa, through the latter's envoy Damodar (Sonabar ?) to take down the bride by the route of Satgaon and Teteliguri in the Kachari territory, the plea being that journey by the usual Gobha road was not possible owing to the presence of the great enemies, the Yavans (Muslims), in that State.²⁸⁵ As Jayanta's rupture with the Kacharis became complete Jashamanik changed his policy towards the State of Dimarua. He released its captive Chief Prabhakar and restored the old friendship with him by showing him due honour and offering him presents.

Hso-Hseng-Hpa sent his envoy Sitalial to Jashanarayan to ask for passage through Satgaon. But the Kachari Raja refused to comply with the request and pointed out that the same road, by which the bride would travel, would be used by his antagonist, the Jayanta Raja, to invade his country.²⁸⁶ Hso-Seng-Hpa made a further request for passage by sending his envoys Sitalial and Srikantha who were asked to remind the Kachari Raja of his status as a tributary Chief installed and protected by the Svarga Maharaja.²⁸⁷ The envoys were this time detained without reception by the Kachari Raja, who also used strong words against

285 KB, p. 22.

286 Ibid, p. 22.

287 AB - 'SMJC', p. 50.

the Svargadev.²⁸⁸ Such a challenging attitude of the Kachari Raja was probably encouraged by the defeat of the invincible Ahoms at the hands of Naranarayan and Chilarai. The king then held a council with his ministers and nobles on this issue and decided with the consent of all to bring down the Jayanta Princess over the Kachari territory even by using force in the event of obstruction and that no permission of the dependent Kachari Raja was necessary for cutting the jungles for a road through his country.²⁸⁹ It appears from the accounts that in those days there were no good roads for communication with the hill countries and in most cases riverways were used.

An army was then sent by Hso-Hseng-Hsa in the summer of A.D. 1606 by the Dhansiri to occupy the Kachari country.²⁹⁰ It was headed by General Laku Barpatra and the other generals who accompanied him were Chaopet Bura-Gohain, the Shairing Raja, the Tipam Raja, the Sadiyakhwa Gohain, the Marangikhowa Barchetia and Rup Handikoi. They all advanced up the river and reached the outskirts of the brick city (Dimapur) of the Kacharis and encamped opposite the Lion Gate (Singha-Duar or Bar-Duar) of the city.²⁹¹ Another army was sent down by the way of the Kallang Suti to Raha and thence up the Kapili under the command of General Sundar Gohain.²⁹² With this army the king also sent the Salal Gohain, Kham-Shen Bar-Gohain, Madnokhowa Hazarika and Neog Phukan (or Langi Raj-Neog), the brother of Nang-Blak (or Nangbu), to fetch

288 Ibid., p.22.

289 JB, p.14.

290 KB, p.22.

291 KB, p.22 ; AB, pp.95-96 ; DAB, p.52 ; AB - 'SMJC', p.50.

292 DAB mentions as Sundar Naboich-Phukan.

the Princess of Jayanta.²⁹³ General Sundar Gohain and the other generals during their advance captured one Raja Lahar (Tai-Ahom Lakat), who was a protected chief of the Kacharis, and sent him as a prisoner to the king.²⁹⁴ The Ahom generals then halted in the field called Hanan for a night and prepared themselves to attack the Kachari province of Satgaon. In the next morning the assault was delivered and Satgaon devastated and occupied. The Ahoms also captured many guns, swords and spears from the defeated Kacharis.²⁹⁵ The Kacharis beat a precipitate retreat to Maibang. After that the Ahom generals made their next camp at Demera.²⁹⁶

Sundar Gohain then sent Parbatia Barua to inspect and repair the road where necessary. The latter proceeded with his men and came upon the Kachari fort at the confluence of the Kapili and Maridayang rivers where a garrison was stationed to resist the advance of the Ahoms. He attempted to capture it by an assault but was repulsed. The Kacharis seized him and another named Shila in the engagement and put both of them to death.²⁹⁷ Some of the men returning from that place reported to Kham-Shen Bar-Goahin and Sundar Naoboicha-Phukan all about the reverse.

²⁹³ AB, p.95 ; DAB, p.52.

²⁹⁴ DAB, p.52 ; AB, p.95.

²⁹⁵ AB, p.95 ; DAB, p.52. The Kachari villages occupied by the Ahoms in the province of Satgaon in this campaign were 1. Tiyyori, 2. Devargaon, 3. Dharmapur, 4. Namar, 5. Baki (Sakin in KB, p.23), 6. Lahor and 7. Satgaon - See AB, - 'SMJC', p.50. From the accounts Satgaon appears to be an area between Kampur and the confluence of the Dayang and the Kapili.

²⁹⁶ KB, p.23. In DAB, (p.52) the place mentioned is not Demera but the confluence of the Dayang and the Kapili. These two places seem to refer to the same area as Demera is very close to or almost in the same place.

²⁹⁷ AB, p.95 ; DAB, p.52.

They then held a council and decided to advance up the Kapili. Accordingly they ascended that river and encamped at its junction with the Dayang.²⁹⁸ With the advent of the dry season (October-November) the king proceeded down to Thekerabari and made his camp at that place.²⁹⁹

When the road for the Jayanta Princess's journey was made clear by the occupation of the Kachari territory she was escorted from Jayantapur to Dharamtika in a royal palanquin by the party sent by the king for the purpose in the month of Dinching (November-December). In the next stage of her journey from Dharamtika to Raha she was escorted by Madnokhowa Hazarika. From Raha onward to Thekerabari she was escorted by Lasham Bharali³⁰⁰ who had been sent thither for the purpose by the king and Sobha Tamuli with Damodar Kataki escorted her to Garhgaon.³⁰¹

Ahom-Kachari War : Prince Bhimbal's Success :

Sundar Gohain had been instructed by the king not to leave his camp and come down until further orders.³⁰² After the Jayanta Princess had been safely brought down the king directed Sundar Gohain and Kham-Shep Bar-Gohain to advance and attack the Kacharis. They accordingly moved forward and crossed the Dayang and made their next camp with his army on the opposite bank.³⁰³ In these encampments many of Sundar Gohain's men fell ill,

298 AB, ibid. ; DAB, ibid.

299 AB, ibid. ; DAB, ibid.

300 He was otherwise Lasham Gohain. See AB, p.96.

301 JB, p.14.

302 JB, p.14.

303 JB, p.14; AB - 'SMJC', p.51.

probably because of the mosquito-infested inhospitable surroundings. But yet with the king's order the Gohain opened up a route by clearing jungles up to a village called Baligaon to march his troops to attack the Kachari capital, Maibang. Jashanarayan also advanced to his fort at Jatragarb. There were skirmishes from time to time between the Ahoms and the Kacharis without any decisive victory.³⁰⁴

But Jashanarayan thought it expedient to come to terms with the Ahoms and sent envoys to Sundar Gohain requesting him not to attack Maibang and proposing to give hostages for his return. Sundar Gohain demanded the Raja's eldest son Bhimbal Konwar (or Bhim Darpa) and the elephant Pavan as hostages. When Jashanarayan told Bhimbal about the terms of peace, the latter refused to submit and resolved to fight, but advised Jashanarayan to take from the Gohain seven days' time to give the hostages under the pretence of submission so that preparations to fight the Ahoms could be completed in this interval.³⁰⁵ At this stage Sundar Gohain learnt from Bhandari Gohain that the king was carrying on illicit amours with his chief wife.³⁰⁶ The report killed all enthusiasm of the general for war and he apprehended risk to his life on his return home. 'Is there any hope of my life?' he murmured, 'death is there whether I fall in war or go to Garhgaon'.³⁰⁷

³⁰⁴ KB, pp.23-24.

³⁰⁵ Ibid., p.24. According to a manuscript account Bhimbal was younger brother of Jashanarayan. (Vide vol.II, Part I, Tr. 84 in DHAS.)

³⁰⁶ JB, p.15 ; KB, p.24 ; AB - 'SMJC', p.51.

³⁰⁷ JB, p.15.

He therefore became more or less indifferent to his duties. This love affair of the king, which had commenced soon after Sundar Gohain's departure for the Kachari campaign, might be another reason why the Gohain was asked not to return home early. The Kacharis too, by a gesture to submit created complacence in his mind and he allowed them to come to his camp in and out of time.

Taking advantage of this slackness in vigilance Jashanarayan sent many spies to his camp in company with the fire-wood suppliers and water-carriers to offer rice, gourds and other vegetables.³⁰⁸ These spies reported to him how the Gohain was living in the camp without taking proper security measures. He therefore prepared himself to attack the Gohain in one night and just before that engaged some men to enter the Ahom camp as usual in the company of the fire-wood suppliers and water-carriers with potfuls of water and pour them into the muzzles of the guns there undetected and also to block the barrels with grass. The instruction was successfully carried out and in the small hours of the morning that night Prince Bhimbal with 500 picked warriors attacked the Ahom fort. His famous war elephants, Satrudaman and Pavan, dashed off parts of the ramparts of the fort opening up passages through which the fighting men of Bhimbal entered the camp and started killing the Ahom garrison. General Sundar Gohain ordered his gunmen to open fire at the Kacharis, but the guns did not fire as

the Kacharis had already poured waters in them. Two-thirds of the Ahom garrison with the officers fell under the Kachari swords and only one-third escaped. Sundar Gohain being helpless fled and hid himself inside a thorny thicket on the side of the Dayang river in the neighbourhood of the Kapili, but was found and pierced to death with a spear by a Kachari. Kham-Shen Bar-Gohain was also pierced to death by the enemies. The Kacharis acquired a large amount of war materials. The heads of both the Gohains were then cut off and presented to the Kachari Raja Jashanarayan. This event is dated Sak 1528 (A.D. 1606) in the Chronicle.³⁰⁹ Jashanarayan executed the two Kacharis who, instead of capturing alive the two Gohains, killed and severed their heads, for, otherwise, such great generals and nobles of the Assam Raja 'would have, by their presence in my Court', said he, 'enhanced my fame and prestige as conquerors of the Ahoms in the eyes of foreign ambassadors visiting this country'.³¹⁰

After this victory over the Ahoms Jashanarayan assumed the title of Pratapnarayan and the name of Maibang was changed into Kirtipur (City of Fame). Since that time (A.D. 1607)

³⁰⁹ KB, pp. 24-25 ; JB, pp. 15-16 ; AB - 'SMJC', p. 52. According to the version in AB - 'SMJC', Sundar Gohain ran towards the river when the watchman's hut, in which he was hiding, was set fire to by the Kacharis, but was chased and killed by the latter with a spear as he jumped into the waters. The date of his death as mentioned in this account is Sak 1537 (A.D. 1615), but this date is unacceptable being different from the date A.D. 1606 as given in the Tai-Ahom and other Chronicles.

³¹⁰ KB, p. 25 ; AB - 'SMJC', p. 52.

the Kachari Raja became independent of the Ahoms and hence stopped all feudal dues in terms of services and tributes which used to be offered so long to the overlord, the Svargadev.³¹¹ When the Ahom king received the shocking news of the great disaster in which the two veteran generals, Sundar Gohain and the Bar-Gohain, lost their lives he wanted to invade the Kachari kingdom, but he also anticipated Muslim invasion of Assam some day or other in the near future. 'The Bangals are my greater enemies' said he and therefore he was unwilling to exhaust his resources in a Kachari war. He therefore decided to conciliate the Kacharis and harness his strength against the Muslims. He ordered Laku Barpatra to leave his camp near the brick city and withdraw his army from the Kachari territory. He himself left his camp at Thekera finally for Garhgaon only in Lakmi Taoshinga (A.D. 1608).³¹² At Garhgaon he offered oblations to the dead and sacrifices to the gods.³¹³

Koch Affairs : Princess Mangaldoi For Hso-Hseng-Hpa :

When Chilarai died³¹⁴ his son Raghudevnanarayan lived under the care of Naranarayan. Gait refers to the Akbarnamah as

311 KB, p.25 ; AB - 'SMJC', p.53.

312 DAB, p.53.

313 AB, p.97.

314 In course of an expedition against the Muslims Chilarai was attacked by small-pox and died on the banks of the Ganges. (See Gait : op.cit., p.55). The story given in AB - 'SMJC', (p.43) says that after his release from captivity at Gaur he died at the sight of his son Raghudev as predicted by an astrologer of Raja Naranarayan, but it appears to be a fable interpolated into the narrative from hearsay. But that Chilarai died before Naranarayan is a fact.

saying that Naranarayan lived the life of an ascetic and did not marry till late in life, but he at last married only on the urgent representations of his brother Chilarai and, in due course, had a son.³¹⁵ Until then Raghudev was regarded as the heir to the throne. But according to Rajopakhyana Naranarayan had married before he became king and it was through his wife that he got the throne from his elder brother Nara Singha.³¹⁶ It might be that Naranarayan had his son born long after his marriage. This son, named Lakshminarayan, was the only son of Naranarayan who succeeded to the throne and ruled over Koch Behar from A.D. 1587 to 1714.

Well before Lakshminarayan's accession the old officers and councillors of Chilarai expressed their feelings to Raghudev that it would be better for him to become an independent ruler at Ghilavijaypur, than to remain as a dependent prince in Naranarayan's Court. They also reminded him how Vishva Singha himself made a partition of the kingdom giving the territory east of the Bar Sonkosh to Chilarai and the western part to Naranarayan. Raghudev felt encouraged by the advice and with Naranarayan's approval and good wishes he, with all the followers and councillors, left Koch Behar and became king at Ghilavijaypur, which was itself probably called Barnagar or

³¹⁵ His History of Assam, pp. 55-56.

³¹⁶ Rajopakhyana, Part II, Chapter I, pp. 29-30 as quoted in The Cooch Behar State, p. 229, Foot-note.

capital in Assam Chronicles.³¹⁷ He strongly fortified the city. Just to eliminate causes of future disputes over the kingdom Naranarayan formally made over to Raghudev the territories east of the Sonkosh, the western part forming the kingdom for himself and his descendants. This partition of the kingdom was made on the basis of Raghudev's acknowledgement of the overlordship of his uncle Naranarayan to whom he would pay tributes.³¹⁸ Muslim writers called this eastern kingdom of Raghudev Koch Hajo, while the western one, ruled by Naranarayan and his successors, Koch Behar.

Gait describes Raghudev's kingdom as comprising the present Mangaldoi Sub-Division and the districts of Kamrup and Goalpara with a southern strip extending to eastern Mymensingh.³¹⁹ On Naranarayan's death Raghudev declared his independence of Koch Behar. Lakshminarayan, who succeeded Naranarayan, was a weak Raja and could not compel Raghudev to pay tributes. All that he could contrive to do was to stir up a rebellion headed by Raghudev's son Parikshit himself. Raghudev quashed it capturing Parikshit and executing his associates. After a time Parikshit escaped from prison and fled to Koch Behar where he was cordially received by Lakshminarayan. But

³¹⁷ Kamrupar Buranji, pp.13-14. This Buranji (p.18) says that the capital-city was established at Vijaypur on the bank of the Ghila river in Ajara village. It is also called Ghilavijaypur and is located on the east of the Bar Sonkosh, which flows into the Brahmaputra on the west of Dhubri as the Gangadhar, and west of the Gadadhar about ten miles up from its mouth. There is also the river Saru or small Sonkosh east of Dhubri.

³¹⁸ History of Assam, p.56.

³¹⁹ Ibid., p.62.

hostilities arose between Raghudev and Lakshminarayan, and finding Raghudev more powerful the latter sought protection from the Mughul Empire by becoming its vassal in A.D. 1596. He also gave a daughter in marriage to Raja Man Singha, the then Governor of Bengal, in 1597.³²⁰ A force was then sent by Man Singha for the protection of Koch Behar.

Raghudev Narayan died about A.D. 1603, the year of Hso-Hseng-Hpa's accession, either from snake-bite or poison administered by the mother of his second son, Indranarayan.³²¹ He left behind eighteen sons³²² of whom the eldest one, Parikshitnarayan, was in Behar and Indranarayan was about to succeed to the throne. The ministers being opposed to it invited Parikshit, who immediately proceeded to Ghilavijaypur and was placed on the throne. He captured Indranarayan and executed him.³²³ Man Singha, the uterine brother of Indranarayan, fled to the Ahom capital with his followers and placed himself under the protection of king Hso-Hseng-Hpa, who, knowing him to be a Koch prince treated him honourably and settled him at Namrup with a princely position.³²⁴ Parikshit removed his capital to North Gauhati and built a palace near the Asvakranta Hill.³²⁵

³²⁰ Ibid., pp.64-65.

³²¹ Ibid., p. 64. Gait says A.D. 1603 is the year in which the coins of his successor Parikshit were issued.

³²² Sons are : 1. Parikshit, 2. Indranarayan, 3. Jadurai, 4. Bhava Singha, 5. Makundadev, 6. Balinarayan, 7. Man Singha, 8. Mahindra Singha, 9. Gohain-Mogai, 10. Gohain-Raichand, 11. Sundarnarayan, 12. Gohain-Maidan, 13. Gohain-Mehannarayan, 14. Madhunnarayan, 15. Vrisaketu, 16. Anantanarayan, 17. Pratapnarayan and 18. Vijay Singha. - See Kamrupar Buranji, p.14.

³²³ It is said in the Kamrupar Buranji (p.14) that Meches, engaged by Parikshit, killed Indranarayan by wringing his neck.

³²⁴ AB - 'SMJC', p.47.

³²⁵ Gait : op.cit., p.64.

Parikshit having settled himself firmly refused to acknowledge the supremacy of Lakshminarayan. Clashes occurred between the two rulers and both sought the friendship of the Ahoms. In the Tai-Ahom Chronicle it is related that in Lakni Taoshinga (A.D. 1608) Hso-Sheng-Hpa sent Sagar Kandali and Bar-Bamun's son to ask the Koch king to offer a princess to him.³²⁶ Gait says that in 1608 Parikshit gave his daughter Mangal Dahi (Mangaldoi) to Pratap Singha (Hso-Hseng-Hpa).³²⁷ The Koch king mentioned in the Tai-Ahom Chronicle is thus Parikshit and not Raghudev as said in some Assamese Buranjis, for the latter had already died by that time. The Koch king also sent with his daughter twenty families of slaves and twenty families of domestics as dowry. Parikshit's son Vijitnarayan was the founder of the Bijni dynasty of Goalpara. Of the other sons of Raghudev Balinarayan became the Raja of Darrang and Gajenarayan, not identified among Raghu's sons in the Kamrupar Buranji, became the Raja of Beltola in South Kamrup.³²⁸

Taking advantage of the struggle for succession between Parikshitnarayan and Indranarayan Lakshminarayan invaded Ghilavijaypur. By the time Parikshit had secured the throne with the support of the nobles. In the war Lakshminarayan was worsted and his beloved brother Balidev narayan was killed. Lakshminarayan

³²⁶ AB, p.97.

³²⁷ Gait : op.cit., p.64.

³²⁸ Genealogical Table of the Koch Kings of Kamarupa and Feudatory Chiefs of Cooch Behar in The Cooch Behar State, p.603.

fled to Koch Behar. Thereafter Parikshit led a series of attacks on Lakshminarayan's territories which the latter found it difficult to defend. This led Lakshminarayan to approach Islam Khan at Ghoraghat in A.D. 1608 and then the Mughul Emperor Jahangir³²⁹ for help by offering his daughter to him. Jahangir sent Mukarram Khan with twenty-two Omraos to capture Parikshit alive if possible and bring him to Delhi. Parikshit advanced to Dhubri and entrenched himself there to fight the Mughul general. On arrival at Dhubri the enemies besieged the Koch fort, 'the foremost of all the forts in the Koch territory'. Parikshit gave a great fight against the mixed attacking Mughul army/under the supreme command of Mukarram Khan and it was only after a long and heroic struggle and the defeat of the Koch navy that Parikshit had ~~xxxxxx~~ to retreat. According to Kamrupar Buranji (p.19) Parikshit fought from his fort at Dhubri for one year before he could be defeated. He retreated to Ghila and then to Pandu but was pursued by Mukarram Khan reinforced by Lakshminarayan on the Sonkosh. The Mughuls occupied Ghilavijaypur (Bar-Nagar)³³⁰ and the imperial fleet reached Pandu.

Parikshit appealed to the Ahom king for assistance and the latter invited him to Garhgaon assuring him of all protection.

³²⁹ not Shah Jahan, as mentioned in Kamrupar Buranji, who became emperor in A.D. 1628. See Kamrupar Buranji, pp.14-15; AB - 'SMJC', p.54.

³³⁰ called thereafter Gilanay (New Ghila) or Jahangirabad by the Mughuls.

But at the instance of his interested ministers he suddenly changed his mind and negotiated for peace with the leader of the Muslim expedition, Shaykh Kamal, who also accepted peshkash, and was inclined for peace against the wishes of the imperial officers. At Shaykh Kamal's suggestion Parikshit negotiated with Mukarram Khan by sending his envoy Ramdas informing him of his willingness to submit and pay regular tributes if his honour and security were guaranteed.³³¹

Mukarram Khan and Shaykh Kamal assured them by touching the Qur'an and the former advised Parikshit to accompany him to the Padshah, an interview with whom would be of great benefit to him. He agreed to it and proceeded with Mukarram Khan, first, to meet Islam Khan, the Governor of Bengal (called Subahdar of Bengal). The victorious Mughul imperial army was left in the conquered country of Kamarupa under the command of Abdu's - Salam, the second brother of Mukarram Khan. Mirza Quasim was directed to occupy all the Thanas of Pandu that had already come into his hand. The Mughul fleet was left at Pandu under the command of Raja Satrajit. Thus placing Kamrup under the Mughul military commanders Mukarram Khan proceeded with the Koch Raja to Dhaka (Jahangirnagar as renamed by Islam Khan), the headquarters of Islam Khan. It is recorded in the Chronicles of Kamarupa that from that time Kamarupa came under the Mughuls.³³²

³³¹ Kamrupar Buranji, pp.15-16, 19 ; BG.I, p.252. A fuller detail of this Mughul campaign against the Koch country is given in the Baharistan-i-Ghaybi (see Dr. M.I. Borah's translation, DHAS, vol. I, Chapter XI, pp.222-253).

³³² Kamrupar Buranji, pp. 16,19 ; BG.I, p.253.

Islam Khan had left for Bhawal through which Mukarram Khan and Parikshit would come, but died before their arrival. Parikshit reached that place only to pay respects to the dead-body of Islam Khan as it is recorded in Islam Nama. Parikshit was presented to the next Governor of Bengal Qasim Khan who simply remanded him to the custody of his officers together with Lakshminarayan, who had been also brought in from Khuntanagar by Raja Raghunath sent for the purpose.

They were later on taken to Delhi. In Delhi Padshah Jahangir tried to bring about a reconciliation between Parikshit and Lakshminarayan and for the purpose asked the nephew to bow down to his uncle touching the latter's feet, but it was thought by Parikshit to be a humiliation and was not complied with.³³³ The Padshah then sent back Lakshminarayan to Koch Behar with presents of Iraqi horses and swords. In order to be restored to power Parikshit was asked to pay a sum of four lakhs of rupees and send his four sons³³⁴ as hostages to Delhi.

Accepting these terms while Parikshit was returning home he fell ill and died at Prayag.³³⁵ His dominions, as far as the Bar Nadi, were then annexed to the Mughul Empire.

333 Ibid., pp.16-17, 19 ; also AB - 'SMJC', p.54.

334 sons were Dhirnarayan, Darpanarayan, Bhimnarayan and Surnarayan. According to the accounts in Kamrupar Buranji (p.19) and AB - 'SMJC', he gave the sum and the hostages and then returned. (See also DHAS, Tr.84 in vol.II, P.I. MS. p.14).

335 Kamrupar Buranji, p.19 ; AB - 'SMJC', p.54. Kamrupar Buranji contains also a different version of Parikshit's death according which he was sent back again to the Emperor by Islam Khan for appearing before the latter with a Padsha's portrait and receiving a salute. This time Parikshit, while on way to Delhi, committed suicide at Triveni Tirtha (i.e. Prayag or Allahabad).

But rebellions broke out here and there in Kamarupa which had to be dealt with by the Mughuls. Qasim Khan, the Governor of Bengal, appointed Mirza Imam Quli Beg Shamlu as the Chief Administrative Officer in Kamarupa and the latter arrived at Jahangirabad (Ghilevijaypur). Mirza Imam Quli and Mirza Nathan with other officers and a force attacked the rebels at Dalgaon and defeated them and Mir Abdu'r-Razzaq recaptured from the rebels the fort at Rangamati.³³⁵

Qasim Khan then appointed Saiyid Aba Bakr,³³⁶ Zamindar of the mauza of Kishar, who was the chief of his officers, to command an expeditionary force for the conquest of Assam (Ahom kingdom), but before that he was instructed to make a clean sweep of the Koch rebels of Kamarupa and establish Thanas.³³⁷ He was also ordered by Qasim Khan to proceed farther from the Thana of Hajo, the head-quarters of the Mughul Thanadars or Chief Administrative Officers for Kamarupa. He therefore advanced to Kukkata to the east of Srigat or modern Amingaon and was joined there by other Mughul commanders taking their garrisons from their respective Thanas of Kamarupa. But Kamarupa at the time bristled up with rebellions, particularly at Khuntaghat and Dhamdhama, and more forces had therefore to be immediately sent by the Bengal

335 BG. I, pp. 316-318.

336 Saiyad Babakar of Assamese Buranjis.

337 BG. I, p. 319.

Governor to keep the country under control. The Mughuls also put pressure on Shingari in Darrang and two years had thus elapsed.³³⁸

Though the vital centres of the Koch country were occupied by the Muslims, yet Parikshit's brother Balinarayan refused to submit to them. He appears to have taken his refuge in Darrang, but was helpless and so went to Garhgaon and prayed for protection of the Ahom king Hso-Hseng-Hpa in A.D. 1615. The latter blamed Parikshit for the Koch misfortune ; for, instead of responding to his invitation to put up a joint front against the Mughuls Parikshit resorted to the foolish policy of submitting to them and reaped the consequences that he had. Yet Hso-Hseng-Hpa treated the fugitive Koch prince with a generous hospitality and installed him as Raja of Darrang with the title of Dhamanarayan. At this his brothers Chandranarayan and Rapnarayan with other Koch princes ^{paid} came and their homage to the Svarga Maharaja and were settled at Janji with offer of wives, attendants, servants and villages for their maintenance.³³⁹

Ahom-Mughul Border Incidents :

The sudden collapse of the Koch power and Parikshit's abject surrender to the Mughuls left a large part of the Koch

³³⁸ Kamrupar Biranji, p.19.

³³⁹ AB, p.98; DAB, p.54 ; Kamrupar Biranji, p.19;
AB - 'SMJC', p.60.

territory in the east without a ruler. Balinarayan and other princes of his family did not support their brother's policy of surrender and continued to resist. In the hope of salvaging at least the unoccupied eastern part of the Koch kingdom of Kamarupa Balinarayan approached the Ahom king for help and protection against the advancing Mughuls. The Ahom king, too, could not allow the Muslims to lay claim to all the territories of Parikshit as inheritors on the latter's surrender to them. Such a claim the Ahom government would never recognise. When therefore the Muslims advanced towards the east and annexed the kingdom on the west of the Bar Nadi, the Ahoms brought under their control the Koch territory between the Bar Nadi and the Bharali which was then outside the effective occupation of the Mughul army. Thus the part of the present Darrang district west of the Bharali came under Ahom control and the Ahom officer called Habung Chetia, who was in charge of the north bank territories of the Ahoms, was required to extend his control and supervision to the western Darrang area also. Whether the Ahom government could so immediately set up a complete and effective machinery with a network of chawkis in this area is not clear from the accounts.

In this situation a merchant known as Ratan Shah (or Ratna Shah) purchased aloes wood for the Emperor at Singari in western Darrang which was within the jurisdiction of the newly acquired territory of the Ahoms. The Ahom officer Habung Chetia came to know about it and reported the matter

to the king. With the king's order he seized the contraband stocks of wood, purchased by the foreign merchant, and expelled him from the territory under his control and supervision. The merchant Ratan Shah complained to Saiyid Aba Bakr at Hajo about the incident. The latter asked Raja Satrajit about where lay the boundary between the territories of the Ahoms and of Parikshit. Satrajit said that it was the river Bharali (Bharali). This led Aba Bakr to conclude that the territory as far as the Bharali then belonged now to the Mughuls and Ratan Shah was quite within the jurisdiction of the Mughul territory in carrying on his commercial transactions at Singari, which was to the west of the Bharali. This claim was rejected by the Ahom government.

Meanwhile king Hso-Hseng-Hpa suspected hostile moves of the Mughuls on the border. So he sent out an officer called Shengdhara with a force to survey the western Ahom territories up to the frontier chavki at Kajali, inspect the chavkis and take punitive action against foreigners (Bengals), or capture them, if found within the Ahom borders. While going out in his reconnoitring tour he actually found, as expected, some unauthorized persons of Bengal with boats inside the Ahom territory. At this time these persons were buying pulses, mustard and other commodities on the north bank river side. He attacked them and captured two boats and killed two persons. This incident was also reported by Ratan Shah and

others connected with them to their Chief Aba Bakr and the Omraos at Hajo.³⁴⁰

Aba Bakr's assertion that after Parikshit's surrender the Mughuls became the rightful successors of the entire former territory of the Koch Raja was not recognized by the Ahom government. Aba Bakr was sent by the Bengal Subahdar with the definite order to invade and annex the Ahom territory after quelling the rebellions in the Koch kingdom of Kamarupa and the Ahom king had already forestalled this Mughul policy and therefore did not waste his military resources in another Kachari war. The border incidents only served as an immediate cause of hostility between the Ahoms and the Mughuls.

Mughul Invasion Of Assam :

The Ahoms Annihilated Aba Bakr's Expeditionary Force :

In the month of Dinchit (May-June) in A.D. 1616 Saiyid Aba Bakr appeared with his navy at the mouth of the Kalang to invade the Ahom territory. He found there at Kajali chawki an Ahom fleet of three hundred war-boats on guard-duty.³⁴¹ The local Ahom commanders immediately attacked the Mughul force, but suffered a defeat and retreated with the loss of some boats. Satrajit entered Sala by the Kalang,

340 For the two border incidents see Kamrupar Buranji, p.20 ; ACA, pp.81-82.

341 BG. I, p.395.

killed a few men and looted a royal store. ~~XXXXX~~ He also forcibly seized three female temple-dancers and sailed off.³⁴² In full appraisal of the gravity of the situation Hso-Hseng-Hoa despatched a powerful force under Thakbak Bura-Gohain, Guimela Bar-Gohain, Laku Barpatra, the Sadiya-khowa Gohain and the Shairing Raja against the Mughuls. They made a fort at Dikhaumukh and were prepared to meet the enemy. In the month of December, 1616, the king himself advanced with an army and landed at Visvanath. Then under the king's uncle, Prince Chao-Lai as Commander-in-Chief, Khamprat Bar-Gohain, Laku Barpatra and the allied and tributary Rajas proceeded with their men to the main base at Samdhara, and then moved forward to the east bank of the Bharali where they raised a fort. Within a fortnight the Mughul imperial army, by six marches from Kalangmukh, reached the Bharali on the north bank and made its landing with cavalry on the sand beach of the Brahmaputra in the month of January and pitched their camp on the opposite bank of the Bharali facing the Ahoms.

Soon after their landing the Mughuls made a cavalry charge across the Bharali along the sand bank against the Ahoms killing some of them and capturing an officer called Ringsa Barpatra. The Mughul cavalry's attack caused the Ahoms to retreat to their main fort of Samdhara.³⁴³ The Ahom king

342 DAB, p. 54 ; Kamrupar Buranji, p. 20.

343 DAB, p. 55 ; Kamrupar Buranji, p. 21 ; BG. I, p. 395.

Pikohai Hazarika, Langu Neog, Bharali Chetia, Laluk Gohain and a few others. Early at dawn of Saturday, the 15th Magh, the Ahom army and navy delivered simultaneously fierce attacks on the Mughuls, the war elephants demolishing the enemy fortifications at the same time. The onset of the attack was so terrific that it overwhelmed the Mughuls and they began to flee towards the sand beach of the Brahmaputra. In the melee the proud general Aba Bakr was recognised and killed. In one account he is said to have been pierced to death by an arrow. The larger part of the Mughul army and navy was destroyed by the Ahoms and the rest with a number of Omraos were surrounded on the sand beach and made prisoners. Satrajit narrowly escaped with two boats.³⁴⁶ The Ahoms also lost a number of army officers among whom the Hati-Barua (Superintendent of the elephant corps), Leo-Barua and Lechai-Hkun were the chief and the naval officers lost were Lasham-Thaomong and Chiringdang's son Lao. Lasham-Hkun-Tong of the navy had a bullet wound, but did not die.³⁴⁷

Mirza Nathan describes more vividly this defeat and destruction of the invading Mughul army by the Ahoms. He narrates that 'when the enemy entered the fort and killed the Sardar, a confusion arose among the land-force on the bank ; they became perplexed and did not know what to do'. He further

³⁴⁶ Kamrupar Buranji, pp.21-22 ; DAB, p.56 ;
AB - 'SMJC', p.60.

³⁴⁷ DAB, p.56 ; Kamrupar Buranji, p.23.

says 'the fleet of the enemy fell upon the fleet of the Zamindars' and 'dashed against many of the boats of the Zamindars and threw gang ways over them, and thus the whole fleet of the Zamindars was attacked. A confusion arose among the Zamindars of Bengal and their fleet and they suffered a defeat. Those who survived fled half-dead, each receiving ten to fifteen wounds'. 'But the enemy without giving up their obstinacy and counting on the full strength of their army, advanced forward and gave no respite. The intoxicated heroes considered their loyalty to be only another name for martyrdom and again and again with great exertions they sallied forth, and thrice gave battle without caring for the stiffness of the struggle. The enemy fell upon the army of Islam from all sides in different groups and batches and made the brave warriors drink the wine of martyrdom. The market of the angel of death became very brisk and it became a veritable Day of Resurrection'.³⁴⁸ The casualties on the Mughul side, as described by the same author, were about 1,700 men killed on the spot, double this number escaped wounded and died in the adjoining places and 9,000 men taken as captives. In addition about 3,000 men came out half-dead and concealed themselves in the jungles.³⁴⁹ Moreover the Ahoms collected 13 elephants, 900 horses and a large quantity of war equipments from the defeated Mughuls.³⁵⁰

348 BG. I, pp. 396-97.

349 BG. I, p. 399.

350 DAB. p. 57 ; Kamrupar Buranji. p. 23.

The Ahom generals threw all the captives of the Mughul army into a temporary prison made of triple stockades of reeds (Khagari) on the beach at Samdhara and placed guards around it. This information was sent to the king who had come forward to Agiabandha and awaited the results of the attack. Meanwhile next day there was a general massacre of the Omraos and the other prisoners of war which ended the hostilities. Ten Hindu Rajas (Bengal Zamindars)³⁵¹ escaped death by surrendering to the Svarga Maharaja and praying for sparing their lives. On the other hand, the king, having sent ahead messengers to the Ahom officers asking them not to kill the prisoners till his arrival at that place, proceeded to Samdhara with a desire to see how the Omraos and the Mughul officers looked, but the messenger was too late to arrive. The king on arriving after the messenger found to his disappointment that all the war prisoners had already been killed. He became enraged at it and went back to Agiabandha. All the materials that had been seized were brought to him. Some of the officers responsible for such a hasty action were even executed by the king and one among them was the Shairing

351 1. Raja Jagdev, 2. Gandharva Ray, 3. Raja Ray, 4. Kala Raja, 5. Hara Raja, 6. Pratap Singha, 7. Indramani, 8. Nara Singha Ray, 9. Bhagavan Ray, 10. Karmachand. The last Raja Karmachand, said to be son of Satrajit, was later sacrificed before the Goddess Kamakhya of the Bhandari (Bharali). This Kamakhya appears to be of Tezpur Bharali and not of Gauhati Bharali. See Kamrupar Purnaji, p.22 and AB - 'SMJC', p.59.

Raja, Prince Chao-Lai. The explanation of the three Gohains (ministers) was that they were not in favour of prolonging the war and remaining confined there, but they too were reprimanded. The account shows that king Hso-Hseng-Ipa had not previously seen Mughul Omraos or officers, they being a new race of people making their first appearance as invaders of Assam. It was therefore the duty of the Ahom officers to give an opportunity to their sovereign to satisfy his curiosity by having a look at them and learn how they were than to describe them to him. This lack of imagination on the part of responsible officers calls for correctives. It is also questionable whether it was within the powers of the army officers to put to death the war prisoners without reference to the king after a decisive victory had been won. If it was within powers, then the sending of information to the Svargadev about how the war prisoners were kept becomes purposeless.

Episode Of Akhek Gohain :

It was Akhek Gohain (Bhandari Gohain) who reported to his father Sundar Gohain during his Kachari campaign about the king's amorous relations with his wife. In consequence of this unhappy news Sundar Gohain became depressed and indifferent and the Kacharis under Bhimbai taking advantage of it won a decisive victory and became independent. Akhek Gohain who, in the meantime, had been placed in command at Dikhaumakh but who was aggrieved at the king's conduct, was found to have

failed in the proper discharge of his duties and was therefore dismissed from his office. He thereafter went over to the north bank and inspired the local chiefs with a spirit of revolt against the king. These chiefs wanted to make him their king. But Akhek's courage failed when the king wanted to capture him and he fled to Parikshit, the Koch Raja of Kamarupa, for protection and soon afterwards to the Muslim Governor of Bengal.³⁵² He had another companion with him and he was his brother Kera Gohain. They came back to Assam with Saiyid Aba Bakr and took part in his invasion of Assam. At the instance of the king Khamprat Bar-Gohain managed to contact in the Bharali camp both Akhek Gohain and Kera Gohain and requested them fervently to come over to the Ahom side. In this the Bar-Gohain solemnly guaranteed their personal security and assured pardon from the king. Akhek Gohain then deserted from the Muslim camp and came over to the midst of the Ahoms, but Kera Gohain did not come.³⁵³ It is said that the victory of the Ahoms over the Mughuls at Bharali owes a great deal to Akhek Gohain's advice and plan of attack.³⁵⁴ He thus fairly compensated for his lost reputation.

Restoration Of Ahom-Kachari Friendship :

At Kirtipur (Maibang) king Jashanarayan was succeeded by Naranarayan and the ^{latter} was succeeded by Bhimbalnarayan. As already

352 Gait : op.cit., pp.107-8.

353 AB - 'SMJG', pp.58-59.

354 Gait : op.cit., p.106.

said the Ahom king Hso-Hseng-Hpa's main concern was to restore friendship with the Kachari Raja so as to maintain intact the resources of his kingdom to fight the Mughuls (Bangals) whose designs on Assam he foresaw. He was also apprehensive lest the Bengal Chiefs should form an alliance with Bhimbainarayan who at the moment arose as his powerful adversary. He therefore sent a goodwill mission of five men as a feeler to Raja Bhimbainarayan with the instruction to say that it was sent by the Gohains. This procedure was a safeguard against any betrayal of weakness on the part of the king. When they reached the Kachari capital and presented themselves before the Raja the latter asked the object of their mission and by whom were they sent. As instructed they said that they came to solicit friendship and alliance and were commissioned by the Gohains. At this he raised the question of Sundar Gohain's invasion of his kingdom and asked whether it was a sign of friendship. The members of the mission replied that Sundar Gohain had been sent only to escort the Jayanta Princess down to the plains and they did not know how he could march forward to attack the Kachari country. The king had remained in utter ignorance of the hostilities and was pleased at the defeat and death of the Gohain which was a right punishment for waging war against the Kachari Raja without his authority. Bhimbal was satisfied with the explanation and acceded to the proposals of friendship and alliance, for he himself was equally eager to establish

friendship with the Ahom king. He expressed his desire that an Ahom princess be given in marriage to him in order to make that friendship real and strong just as the Svargadev favoured his ancestors with such compliments. This desire of his he transmitted to the Ahom king through his envoys. This was fulfilled by the offer of Saringia Handikoi's daughter as a princess from the Ahom king. Raja Bhimbal was pleased to have the princess and the subsequent period was marked by exchanges of embassies and amity between the two countries.³⁵⁵ All this preceded Saiyid Aba Bakr's invasion of Assam. The success of his policy in securing the alliance of the Kachari Raja enabled Hso-Hseng-Hpa to deal a crushing blow on the Mughuls in their first major effort to conquer Assam.

Dimarua (Demeria) became a Dependency of the Ahoms :

The small principality of Dimarua was originally a dependency of the Kacharis, but the latter's oppression drove its chief Pantisvar (Panthesvar) to seek the protection of Narayanarayan when the latter extended his conquests to Assam. Narayanarayan had subdued eighteen hill-side chiefs. He placed the Dimarua chief at the head of all these chiefs and installed him as a tributary Raja under the Koches on the Jayanta frontier with jurisdiction over a tract inhabited by about 18,000 people. Pantisvar's son Chakradhvaj was imprisoned by Narayanarayan for

³⁵⁵ KB, pp. 26-29 ; Wade : op.cit., p. 73.

neglecting to pay the usual tributes, but was later released on the intercession of Raghudev. He was reinstated in his former position by Raghudev when he became Raja of the eastern Koch kingdom. Since then Chakradhvaj paid tributes to Raghudev. Chakradhvaj's descendants Poal Singha, Ratnakar and Prabhakar were tributary to Parikshit. The arrest of Prabhakar by the Jayanta Raja Dhanamanik led to a conflict between Dhanamanik and the Kachari Raja Jashanarayan in which the former was defeated. But when Parikshit surrendered to the Mughuls Prabhakar's son Mangal, who succeeded, met Habung-Pikchai, the Ahom officer at Kajali, and sought the protection of the Svarga Maharaja and the latter was pleased to give the protection prayed for. Thus Dimarua became an Ahom dependency and Mangal a feudatory chief of that State to whom the Svarga Maharaja made presents of a Hengdan (Ahom sword), a wife and an elephant.³⁵⁶ All other chiefs of the south bank also came with their families and submitted to the Svargadev.³⁵⁷

Modification Of Mughal Policy :
Last Days Of Lakshminarayan :

The disastrous defeat of Aba Bakr and Satrajit at the battle of the Bharali was a great blow to the pride and prestige of the Mughuls which sobered down the aggressive

356 Kamrupar Buranji, pp.23-24 ; Tr. 84 (DHAS) ;
BBB in DAB, p.106 ; Gait : op.cit., p.109.
357 BBB in see DAB, p.106.

policy of their rulers towards their eastern neighbours. Another effect of it was the replacement of Qasim Khan by Ibrahim Khan Fathjang in April 1617 as Subahdar of Bengal. On the advice of the new Subahdar, who was both able and tactful, the Emperor, in order to secure Koch co-operation against the Ahoms, the formidable rivals of the Mughuls, whose rise and successes inspired the aggrieved Koches to revolt constantly, released Lakshminarayan by the end of 1617 after a long detention of over three years and reinstated him to his kingdom. Lakshminarayan was now a nominal vassal ruler pledged to serve the cause of the Mughuls. He was in the very next year required to transfer his residence to Hajo to help the Chief Administrative Officer, Shaykh Kamal, of whom he was a favourite and who undertook to realise from him the tribute of one lakh of rupees. Lakshminarayan helped the Mughul commanders from time to time with his own contingents in the campaigns against Assam. He helped particularly his friend Mirza Nathan,³⁵⁸ who was then the Mughul Thanadar of the south bank territory, with a small contingent of horse and foot/^{-soldiers or paiks} when the Ahom, in aid of Raja Balinarayan, Mamu Govinda and Shumarood Kayth (probably Samudra Kayastha) made a series of attacks in September, 1619, on Rani Hat, Minari, Hatigson and other Dakshinkul thanas. Lakshminarayan's help did not count against the massive attacks of the

358 also called Mirza Nathula in the Assamese Chronicles.

Assamese which not only forced Mirza Nathan to flee away from the occupied country but also put the Assamese in possession of a vast quantity of war equipments and 35 horses of Lakshminarayan sent as aid to the Mughul Thunader.³⁵⁹

As a sequel to these reverses Lakshminarayan offered to mediate for peace between the Ahoms and the Muslims, who were constantly engaged in hostilities. The offer was probably accepted by the Bengal Governor. Lakshminarayan then selected one Biru Qazi to go as his representative to Garhgaon for mediation. Biru Qazi first contacted Shaykh Kamal and told about it. He also pointed out how its success would open up the door for obtaining ivory and aloes wood from Assam. With Shaykh Kamal's consent he proceeded to Agiathuti and sent messengers to Langi Phukan, the Ahom officer in charge of Kajali Station, who, in turn, informed the king of the object of Biru Qazi's mission. The king asked Langi Phukan to bring the ambassador to Garhgaon.³⁶⁰

Then in the month of Dinohit (Jaistha) in A.D. 1620 Biru Qazi appeared at Garhgaon with Langi Phukan as a mediator and conveyed to king Hso-Hseng-Hpa the wish of the Muslim king (Mughul Emperor) 'to make peace'. He also said that 'I, your slave, have been sent to you by Lakshminarayan to inform you of the matter'. Hso-Hseng-Hpa detained this ambassador of peace as a hostage with the remark 'If Lakshmi-

359 S.N. Bhattacharyya : op.cit., pp.159-61.

360 Kamrupar Duranji, pp.25-26. ~~Is there a Qazi~~

~~from Garhgaon who was sent to the king of the Ahoms~~
Qazi means a judge, one who decides cases finally.

narayan can manage to put a stop to the war that has been going on between us by making peace, I shall allow you to go back to your country as early as possible, but if Lakshminarayan cannot bring peace, I shall not allow you to go back'.³⁶¹ He was then given quarters at Baghehua to live under proper supervision.

Mirza Nathan, as will be related below, tried to subdue the south bank during 1619-20 but was driven off by the Ahoms. Lakshminarayan sent a contingent of 40 cavalry and 300 paiks to help Mirza Nathan in this campaign. In January, 1620, Mirza Nathan again attacked the Dakshinkul and won a victory over the Assamese.³⁶² To help Mirza in this campaign Lakshminarayan sent his cousin Ram Singh with a force from Hajo. In May, 1624, the rebellious Mughul Prince Shah Jahan defeated the Bengal Subahdar with the result that Lakshminarayan transferred his allegiance to the victorious Prince probably with the hope of getting permission from the latter to go back to his own kingdom. But this opportunity did not come as Shah Jahan was defeated and had to quit Bengal. The Koch Prince again joined the ranks of the old Emperor. The Jesuit travellers

³⁶¹ AB, pp.107-8 ; BBB in DAB, p.108 ; DAB, pp.62-63. Biru Qazi's mission remains unmentioned by Mirza Nathan who had been just driven off from Assam by the Ahoms and was in a desperate situation having little or no notice of this affair, particularly when nothing was known about what happened to Biru Qazi after his departure to Garhgaon. Biru Qazi's activity was known more to the Ahom Court than to the Muslims after he had left Hajo. Hence the record in the Assam Chronicles.

³⁶² S.N. Bhattacharyya : op.cit., pp.160-61.

Stephen Cacella and John Cabral, who appeared at Hajo in August 1626, had audience with Lakshminarayan, but Cacella writing on October 4, 1627 says that he 'is now dead'.³⁶³ Thus he died between these two dates. But according to the Ahom Buranji (p.112), as translated by G.C.Barua, He died in A.D. 1632 and could not offer his daughter to Hso-Hseng-Hpa in marriage which was about to take place. Both the accounts are very definite but irreconcilable. Lakshminarayan was succeeded by his son, Bimarayan, but the latter was not in favour of marrying his sister to Hso-Hseng-Hpa. At this, Biru Qazi took the opportunity of offering his daughter Lakshmi-puria (Lakshmipriya ?) to the king and the grand-daughter Hempuria (Hemapriya ?) to the king's son Chao-ngi Gohain with rich presents of dowries.

Mughul-Ahom War Continued :

The debacle of Aba Bakr's Assam expedition was followed by a series of campaigns by the Ahoms against the Mughuls who had their strongholds in Kamrup. Meanwhile Hso-Hseng-Hpa reconstructed and improved the fortifications at different places, particularly at Samdhara, Kaliabar, Chinatali and Deopani. In A.D. 1618 during November-December (Dinching) the king received at his camp at Yatra-Ghat the Koch princes Chandranarayan, Hemnarayan and Sangramjit who came to pay their respects to him.

³⁶³ Early Jesuit Travellers, (The Hague) by C.Wessels, S.J., 1924, p.126.

They left with presents received from the king. In the following month the vanguard of the Ahom army pushing westward reached Pandu where it erected a fort and reported about it to Svargadev. Next, when the king was at Jolai-bandha, two Dhekeris named Joynarayan and Ramdev paid their homage to him. There came also to the Ahom king large numbers of leading men of Parikshit's kingdom, both from the north and south banks, offering their whole-hearted co-operation in expelling the Muslims from Hajo.³⁶⁴ The king felt encouraged at this support and drew up plans to attack the Muslims.

The affairs of the Mughuls in Bengal and Kamrup about this time deserve notice. Shaykh Ibrahim, who had served as the Karori (Mughul revenue collector) in the Koch country of Kamarupa, misappropriated rupees seven lakhs of the imperial revenues and also caused other losses. He had under him an army of more than three thousand men. Being afraid of investigation into the accounts he sent men to the Ahom king Hseng-Hpa with the following message :- 'As the great imperial army had been annihilated in your country (referring to Aba Bakr's defeat) the only course left open (to the imperialists) to achieve the purpose of extirpating you root and branch, is to send, in near future, a big army against you from Delhi. Under the circumstances, if you help me with men and money and make me the king of Kuch (i.e. Koch country) I will

364 Kamrupar Baranji, p.24.

exert my utmost valour to my last breath, and I will be devoted to you and will never allow the armies of Delhi to proceed against you as long as I live'. The Ahom king welcomed the proposal but could not trust the Mughul officer to place at his disposal men and money. He therefore replied - 'Until you first lead the war against the imperial army in this country and send to me one or two of their men alive or dead, I cannot in my farsightedness believe you all on a sudden. Under the circumstances, if you are firm in this proposal you should utilise this opportunity and put it into execution. The country of Kamrup, nay even (the country of) Manchabat will be given to you. I will give you even my daughter ; and I will give you from my treasury, elephant-stable, artillery and the fleet in such large quantities the like of which you have never seen even in your dreams, not to speak of the hours of your wakefulness', 365

Inspired by this encouraging reply from the Ahom king the Shaykh sent a Koch force to attack the Mughul Thana of Dhamdhama in the present Sub-Division of Halbari and got a Koch rebel chief, named Sanatan, to command it, Mirza Salih Arghun, who was in charge of the garrison of Dhamdhama became aware of the march of the rebel force and remained prepared with the co-operation of the local Zamindars with whom he was on very friendly terms. Sanatan made a very heavy night attack

365 quoted by Mirza Nathan in his account. See B.G. II, p. 443.

on the fort and twice entered it, but Mirza Salih repulsed the attackers on both the occasions. Yet the Mirza fell into a desperate situation and sent urgent messages to Mirza Nathan, who was then the chief of Kamrup and was at Hajo, the provincial head-quarters, asking for reinforcements. Mirza Nathan spared no moment to despatch Mir Abdu'r-Razzaq with a force to the assistance of Mirza Salih but he failed to reach the destination as the road was blocked by the rebels at Jharighat. But Mirza Nathan managed to send war-weapons to the beleaguered garrison by a secret route and also wrote to Mirza Salih to return to Hajo immediately. The supply of arms enabled the latter to fight the enemy and proceed to Hajo, Mirza Nathan escorting him from the river Barlia. The rebels did not succeed. At the same time the Mughul imperial authority on receiving the report of the rebellion despatched a fleet and a large artillery under the chief command of Chishti Khan and the generalship of Shaykh Kamal Islam Khani for punishing Shaykh Ibrahim, whom the Emperor ordered to be captured and sent alive to the imperial Court. The rebel leader successfully eluded capture for a time but eventually after a hard fight he died at the hands of 'Abdu'r-Razzaq, who cut off his head and sent to Dacca.³⁶⁶

Shaykh Ibrahim's death hastened the preparation at Garhgaon to send a powerful army to Gauhati to punish the

³⁶⁶ BG. (Book III, Chap. I) gives full details of Shaykh Ibrahim's rebellion and ultimate tragic end.

Mughuls and drive them out of Kamrup. Hso-Hseng-Hpa bitterly criticised the conduct of the Lower Assam generals in allowing the Shaykh to be killed in that way. 'The destruction of the Shaykh is', he wrote to them, 'due to your treacherous conduct. Now if you do not compensate for it, you will feel its consequences'.³⁶⁷ This news was reported to Mirza Nathan and the latter communicated it to Ibrahim Khan Path-jang, the Mughul Subahdar of Bengal. Sometime back Baldev, the brother of Raja Parikshit, came with a force of 18,000 hill-men and attacked and besieged the fort of Pandu. Though initially there was no success, later it was captured by him after its evacuation by the Muslims.³⁶⁸ Meanwhile the Ahom king despatched Langudam Abhoipuria Barua as the Commandant of the Pandu garrison and he himself proceeded down to Visvanath and thence to Sandhara. He also ordered an army unit with a few officers including Langudam to advance to Agiathuti on the north bank. The Muslims sailed up to that place and engaged the Assamese garrison there in a skirmish. The Muslims being fired at by the Ahom artillery retreated to Hajo. On receipt of the report of this success the Ahom king sent the Bura-Gohain, the Bar-Gohain and the Barpatra-Gohain to Pandu with a large reinforcement.

On the Mughal side the prospect of the Ahom invasion made Mirza Nathan inform the imperial authorities in Dacca and Delhi all about the developments in Assam and ask for necessary

³⁶⁷ BG. II, p. 479.

³⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 480.

reinforcements. Mirza Yusuf was ordered to recapture Pandu well before the arrival of the Ahom army which was on way. He then pitched a camp on a char (island) situated between Hajo and Pandu and made a survey of the Assamese forces. Raja Satrajit with his Hindu officer Badridas was sent to the aid of Mirza Yusuf. But in face of the Assamese forces their courage failed and they returned to Hajo ^{abandoning} ~~from~~ the balichar camp.

The imperial Court appointed Qulij Khan to the post of the Jagirdar and the Chief Administrator of the Koch country. He arrived at Barnagar in Kamrup but could not proceed further as the rumours of enemy activities were very strong. But he was urged by Mirza Nathan by a letter to come to Hajo immediately as 'the Raja of Assam is advancing in triumph'. Qulij Khan then hastened to Hajo and on arrival was received by Mirza Nathan, who also requested the Khan to take over all powers from him. But Qulij asked Nathan to act as the de facto Chief under his advice. For the cowardice of Satrajit Badridas was appointed over him. At that time Shaykh Kamal, with some imperial officers, was away from Hajo as he had been deputed to punish Shaykh Ibrahim. Shaykh Kamal returned to Hajo but did not enter the city owing to his hatred towards Mirza Nathan. He alighted and put up near the Hayagribs Madhava Temple. Under his direction the construction of a fort at Talia or Talaya of the Assamese Duranjis, some five miles north-east of Hajo, was commenced but, it is said, it could not be completed.

The Ahom army and navy with their hill auxiliaries arrived at Gauhati. The king himself issued directions to Gauhati from his Sandhara camp in consultation with his war experts. At this time the Commandant Langudam fell ill and had to retire from Agiathuti. The king immediately appointed Laluk, son of Madnokhwa Hazarika, and Lasham Chiring as Commandants (war Neogs) with powers to behead any body disobeying them. On the north bank the Muslims retreated to Hajo where lay their main fort. The front line of the Ahoms reached Sessa, Agiathuti and Talaya hill. In the background up to Saraighat all necessary fortifications were made. The Ahom navy commanded the waterway. Regarding the strength and disposition of the Assamese forces the writer of the Baharistan-i-Ghaybi gives a graphic description as follows :- 'The Burha-Gohain (Thakbak) at the head of one hundred thousand infantry was to move along the hilly and jungly bank of the Brahmaputra, leaving the hillock of Sultan Ghiyasu'd-Din Awliya (Poa Mucca) to his right and the temple of Kedar to his left, in order to attack Qulij Khan, Mirza Nathan and those who were in the fort of Hajo, and to finish them. Hati Barua (probably Langudam Abhoipuria Barua), Raja Baldev and Shumarayed Kayeth with a force of two hundred thousand infantry, one hundred and eighty elephants ... were to go along with him by the other side of the river in order to fall upon Shaykh Kamal, to sweep him off and not to allow even a bird to fly out of the cordon by a charge from the rear. The Rajkhwa and the Kharghuka

(Khargharia Phukan) were to take the command of the 11 consisting of four thousand war-boats of the class of manu bachari, kusa and kug in order to attack the fleet of the Twelve Bhuyans who were loyally supporting the imperialists, - to seize them and not to allow any of them to escape by the river with his fleet. The Eighteen Hill-Rajas, who sided with the enemy and rebelled against the imperialists, were to take their position with all their hill-men on the bank of the river to the left of their fleet in order to aid it and not to allow any body to escape towards the Dakhinkul (south bank). One thousand war-boats were sent to the mouth of the river Barrowa to the rear of the imperial army in order to block the passage of ration and communication from Fahangimagar alias Bhaka during the days of the siege. In short, the imperial army was brought to bay like games in a hunt'.³⁶⁹ Though certain figures in the Mughul estimates seem to be exaggerated there is nothing to doubt about the general disposition of the Ahom and the allied forces.

The Ahom generals had strict orders not to hasten to the attack before certain tests and their results were known to ^{be} favourable. The king therefore advised the officers and the soldiers not to take aggressive part till they would get final order from him. 'No body must advance from the fort at Sessa', said the king in a message to the three

Gohains and other officers, 'until my order reaches you'.³⁷⁰

Battle of Hajo, 1618 :

From the Ahom camp at Agiathuti reconnoitring parties were sent forward in disguise to watch the activities of the Muslims at Hajo and these parties went very close to the enemy fort and returned safely. One day one hundred Muslim horse (see DAB, p.59) approached the Ahom fort which gave the impression of a move for an attack on it and so the Commandants, in utter disregard of the advice of the Gohains and the Deodhai Pundits to wait for the king's orders, drove out the troops from the fort at night and made an attack on the Muslim fort on the Hajo hill. There was a bloody battle. According to the version in the Baharistan-i-Ghaybi (p.488) the Bura-Gohain advanced at midnight to deliver his gigantic attack with his mighty army by the hilly and jungly tracks. He first massacred the devotees of the holy shrine on the hillock of Sultan Ghiyasu'd-Din Awliya and swept through the side of that hillock smashing the resistance of a group of Mughul officers among whom was also Gulij Khan's son and finally fell upon the stockade of the Khan. One Mughul general named Dust Beg, who lately arrived at Hajo with a

³⁷⁰ AB, p.103 ; DAB, p.59. In the Baharistan-i-Ghaybi (II.p.487) the king's order was just the opposite of it. It quotes the king as saying :- "As the armies of Delhi have not yet begun their attack and as you have already reached near them with a large army, it is proper for you to begin the battle without further delay, according to the maxim - 'He never loses who strikes first' and watch its results".

contingent of twenty thousand men, ran to the aid of the Khan. The Ahoms converged from all sides. 'Every one of them was skilled wherever he was found', but a great resistance was offered by the Khan to their further progress.

Mirza Nathan with his Usmania Afghan Mansabdars and other warriors was posted in the reserve by Qulij Khan in the main fort of Hajo in order to help any regiment if overpowered by the Assamese. While the Bura-Gohain, the supreme commander of his division, the Barpatra-Gohain, Mani Konwar, Man Hazarika and other gallant fighters were, in co-ordination with their navy, hammering the defences of Qulij Khan, the Hati Barua, Raja Baldev (Raja Balinarayan), Shumarud Kayeth, the Bar-Gohain, Lai Gohain and the Raidangia Barua, advancing by the side of the Tilao (Lohit), ascended the Hajo hill at dawn with their huge infantry divisions strengthened by innumerable war elephants in awe-inspiring formations. At that moment Shaykh Kamal was getting ready to go to the assistance of Qulij Khan, who was fighting in a precarious state, but he had to abandon that idea at the sight of the Assam army which commenced firing guns and discharging showers of arrows at the Muslim army he commanded. Now Shaykh Kamal and Raja Satrajit with their imperial Mansabdars had to face this overwhelming danger. In the battle that raged with all fury Shaykh Kamal was pressed so hard that he had to send messenger after messenger to Mirza Nathan frantically asking for help. At the last moment a Hindu officer named Ramdas ran desperately to

the Mirza and cried - 'If aid is delayed by a moment everything will be lost'. Those who were watching the progress of the battle on horseback from elevated places cried out - 'Alas ! Alas ! the enemy has swept the regiment of the Shaykh'. The Mirza then lost no moment in spurring his horse and rushing forth with his cavalry brigade to help the Shaykh. As the Assamese have now come out into the open ground the Mirza made a fierce flank attack on them with his cavalry causing large numbers of them to roll down on the ground in a moment's notice. Yet the morale of the Assamese was kept up and their generals fought with dogged tenacity till their arms were all exhausted. The account of this battle as described in the Baharistan-i-Ghaybi says in admiration 'the generals of Assam fought so hard that all their quivers became empty of arrows and the dutadana (bags for keeping short javelins) became empty of dutas i.e. a kind of javelin which they throw with the strength of their arm and which is always used by them in battles. The affair came to such a pass that they began to hurl from elephant's back their naked hangdang i.e. a kind of half-swords, which they carry in their belts'.³⁷¹ Soon the tide of the battle was changed and the Ahom and allied generals, the Hati Barua, the Bar-Gohain, the Koch leaders and a Chutiya Prince Jadu Deka, being helpless without weapons, had to leave the battle-field to safer places, and the battle was lost.

³⁷¹ BG, II, pp. 490-92. Hangdan is a Tai-Ahom word meaning a kind of sword used by the Ahom nobility. AB, pp. 103-104 ; DAB, pp. 60, Kamrupar Buranji pp. 24-25 ; Brief reference in AB - 'SMJC', p. 61.

This victory was regarded by the Mughuls as one of their foremost military conquests.

In the meantime, the news came of a signal naval victory of the Assamese over the imperial fleet. The Assamese navy derived its main strength from the army of the Bura-Gohain which, fighting on the hill, forced Qulij Khan to fall back on the temple of Mahadev. By an adroit manoeuvre followed by a vigorous attack that navy completely overpowered the imperial fleet driving ashore more than half of its boats. Thereafter the imperial commanders, Suna Ghazi and Islam Quli, were instructed by Qulij Khan not to take their boats away to deep waters over which the Assamese navy had now established complete mastery.³⁷²

Qulij Khan was engaged in a death struggle with the possibility of being wiped out at any time by the Bura-Gohain, and he saw no good in retreating any further. Shaykh Kamal and Mirza Nathan being free after liquidating their adversaries ran to the aid of the Khan. The Ahom infantry was still in the hills and jungles helping their navy in its attack. At the same time a plan had to be evolved immediately for the defence of the main fort at Hajo which was the last resort of the Muslims. According to the plan decided upon Mirza and the Shaykh came to inspect and strengthen the main fort leaving their regiments with the Khan for his help. The Zamindars, who

372 BG, II. pp.490, 495.

were on the river bank, being driven ashore, were asked to leave the bank and concentrate in the fort. The Muslim generals were anxious to end the battle before nightfall as the Ahoms, noted for night attacks, would have then all the advantage and the cavalry would not work effectively in the dark. For a survey of the walls of the main fort at a glance Shaykh Kamal and Mirza Nathan went up on an elephant to the mansion of the Khan on the top of the hillock accompanied by another officer named Mir Ghiyasu'd-Din Mahamud who took a horse, as from that position they could have a commanding view of everything including the fort which was at a lower elevation. When they reached the top of the hillock they began to reconnoitre and saw the victorious Assam navy triumphantly passing by the hillock within the range of big guns. The naval officers did not expect any danger from that quarter. But this bit of carelessness on their part brought a sudden turn of fate ; for, in the mansion of the Khan were kept ready a number of imperial cannon. Mirza Nathan shouted to the gulandaz (cannoniers) to discharge their cannon at the navy. He pointed out two boats, in particular, in which the chiefs of the navy were coming. The cannoniers at once discharged two loaded cannon at them, but they overshot the targets. Not knowing who attacked them the soldiers and boatmen of these two boats jumped into the river. At once an utter confusion prevailed and fear overtook all in the navy with the result that many of those who jumped into the river were drowned

while the others drove fast to the bank where they disembarked in desperation and ran away for safety into the forests. The imperial commanders then fell upon the vanquished navy and seized a large booty. The Muslims took it to be a 'God-given victory'.³⁷³

At the sight of the defeat of their navy the Bura-Gohain's army began to lose heart. At this weak and exciting moment the Muslim generals, raising a cry of Allah-u-Akbar, appeared on the scene and made a furious cavalry attack on the Ahoms, who had by that time advanced to the open plains emerging from the hills and jungles. The Muslims first charged and routed the Abhoipurias of Laku Barpatra-Gohain killing many of them. The Gohain retreated on an elephant, but Mani Konwar was killed. Kera Gohain, who was found with the Mughals, captured a well-known war elephant of the Ahom generals, but the elephant flung him off and returned to the Ahom camp.³⁷⁴ Soon afterwards Thakbak Bura-Gohain had to make a precipitate retreat on an elephant when his troops were dispersed by the onset of the enemy cavalry charges, but was wounded by a stray bullet and fell down from the back of the elephant and his loin was fractured. He was carried off by the Muslims and unknowingly killed by one of the officers of the Zansabdars.³⁷⁵ Thus the victory was at last attained by the Mughals and the kettle-drums of conquest were sounded. The

³⁷³ BG, II. pp. 494-95.

³⁷⁴ Kamrupar Duranji, p. 25.

³⁷⁵ AB, pp. 103-4 ; DAB, p. 60 ; BG, II, p. 496.

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 Ahoms then withdrew to Kajali. It was an unfortunate discomfiture for the Assamese which is to be attributed to the miscalculation and rash adventure of the Ahom war-Neogs, who allowed themselves prematurely to be manoeuvred out of their strongholds by a few Mughul horsemen, who sought an opportunity to pounce upon the Assamese in the open field with their chargers before their strength was exhausted. The Ahom commanders fell into this trap by not waiting for the king's final orders as to what was to be done.

According to the Mughul estimates the Assamese lost to the Mughuls three thousand and eight hundred boats with their booty out of the total strength of four thousand in the whole navy. On the battle-field their loss was three thousand and seven hundred men killed and double of this number died in the adjacent places and more than ten thousand wounded men fled away half-dead. On the Mughul side the total killed were shown to be two hundred men and double of this number were wounded. From the graphic description of the battle as given by the author of the Baharistan-i-Chaybi the Mughul losses seem to be highly minimized. It is also mentioned that the heads of the Assamese soldiers, killed in the battle, were cut off and sent to Dacca.³⁷⁷ In the Buranjis of Assam no mention is made of the Mughul losses but it is admitted that there were heavy casualties among the Assamese and also that the

376 Kamrupar Buranji, p.26 ; AB - 'SMJC', p.61.

377 BG, II, p.497.

Mughuls seized a large number of guns and shields, a large quantity of booty, killed eight elephants and sank many large ships including thirteen gilded ones.³⁷⁸

When the reports of the Ahoms' defeat at Hajo reached the king he again returned to Samdhara and ordered the defeated generals to be brought there. All the leaders and Commandants, who had brought the defeat on them by disobeying the king's timely warning against being rash and aggressive, were variously punished according to the gravity of their offences. The Chief Neogs (Commandants), Laluk Gohain and Lasham Chiring, who were mainly responsible for the defeat, were put into a solitary confinement near the Dikhou river and were starved to death in it.³⁷⁹ According to another version they were pressed to death.³⁸⁰ A number of other officers including Langudam, Abhoipuria Barua were also punished with death. The exact offence for which Langudam was executed is not clear from the text. Probably ^{it} ~~was~~ that he being ill had left his station for home before a substitute was appointed. Even for illness he being the chief commandant at the fort of Pandu should not have gone home all at once leaving it to the mercies of the enemies at that crucial time.

³⁷⁸ AB, p.104 ; DAB, p.60.

³⁷⁹ AB, pp.101-104 ; DAB, pp.58-61 ; Kamrupar Buranji, pp. 24-25. Laluk Gohain was of the Maduriel Bar-Gohain family and was also known as Saru Phuken.

³⁸⁰ Kamrupar Buranji, p.25 ; ACA, p.91.

Offices Of Bar-Phukan and Bar-Barua Created :

As Thakbak Bura-Gohain fell in the battle of Hajo the king appointed Sukula Hudu as the next Bura-Gohain and substituted Piling as Bar-Gohain for Guimela who had proved an incapable general at Hajo. Further, he found that the generals and officers, whom he had appointed, did not act in concert and according to royal commands with the consequence that they suffered defeat. It was only Langi Panisiya who proved his leadership by rallying the fugitive troops and officers and restoring order and morale in the army. He alone could give a true report of the state of affairs of the Lower Assam campaign. Hence the king felt the need of a viceroy of his for the whole of Lower Assam with supreme military and civil authority over all there to prevent future disruptions in the ranks and appointed Langi Panisiya as the first Viceroy under the title of Phu-Kan-Lung or Bar-Phukan with jurisdiction over all the territories west of Kaliabar in the present district of Nowgong. This Bar-Phukan's headquarters were at Kajali. The tracts east of Kaliabar, outside the jurisdictions of the Bar-Gohain and the Bura-Gohain, were since then placed under the administration of another functionary called Phu-Ke-Lung or Bar-Barua. The king's uncle Momai Tamuli was appointed as the first Bar-Barua.³⁸¹

³⁸¹ AB - 'SMJC', pp.61-62, 65 ; Gait : op.cit., p.110 ; ACA, p.91 ; Kamrupar Buranji, p.27.

Magul Camp :
 assigned to Mirza Nathan :

Victory at Hajo led to two consequences ;
 a cause of immediate dissensions in the
 Magul camp at Hajo and secondly, for those very dissensions
 Mirza Nathan had to be sent by the Subahdar to conquer the
Dakshinkul. The dissensions arose from Shaykh Kamal's report
 of the victory at Hajo to the Subahdar of Dacca, Ibrahim Khan
 Fath-jang, in which the Shaykh had taken all the credit for
 it and the Mirza's contribution had been shown to be nothing.
 Following the report the Subahdar appointed Chisti Khan to
 take the chief command in the Koch country. In this Mirza
 Nathan's case was not considered though he had been aspiring
 to the highest place in the conquered country of the Koches.
 Further, as alleged by the Mirza, the Shaykh had instigated the
 top-ranking imperial officers including Qulij Khan against him.
 The quarrel between the Shaykh and the Mirza would have broken
 out into open violence had not the former retrained himself.
 Mirza Nathan proceeded to Dacca to report his version of the
 affairs at Hajo, but the Subahdar was displeased to see him at
 Dacca as he went there by leaving the imperial affairs at Hajo
 in a state of chaos and asked him at once to return to his
 head-quarters. To this the Mirza showed a violent temper as if
 to kill the Subahdar and commit suicide rather than to go
 back to Hajo to serve under others. The Subahdar found a
 solution for him according to which he was deputed to conquer

the as yet unoccupied Sarkar of Dakshinkul of the Koch country and take it as his assignment. So settled, he proceeded to conquer that part of the country with a force consisting of his own regiment and an auxiliary force of more than seven hundred horsemen and matchlockmen, fifty war-boats and ten war elephants.³⁸²

Chishti Khan and the Amirs arrived at Hajo but as Mirza Nathan returned from Dacca 'they could not proceed further in their work'.³⁸³ In this situation Shaykh Kamal went alone to Dacca and after incurring an initial displeasure 'he offered a peshkash of Rs.80,000 to the Khan Fath-jang of the Khan Fath-jang/and secured for himself an increase of 200 in his Mansab and the office of the chief administrator (Sardar) of Ansam'.³⁸⁴ As mentioned above he also obtained permission to have Raja Lakshminarayan as one of his followers at Hajo and undertook to realize the Raja's peshkash of Rs.100,000 in cash and kind and send to Dacca.

Mirza Nathan Invade Dakshinkul :

Mirza Nathan established his main Thana (head station) at Balijana³⁸⁵ and invaded Dakshinkul. There were several Koch rebel chiefs, who still owed their allegiance to their Raja Balinarayan (Baldev of Mughul history) and refused to submit to the Mughul authority. The most powerful of these opponents

³⁸² BG. II, p.502.

³⁸³ BG. II, pp.521-22.

³⁸⁴ Ibid., p.522.

³⁸⁵ in Meekpara, south Goalpara. Martin refers to mud forts raised by the Mughuls at that place of which the traces are still to be seen. (See Eastern India, III, p.479).

were Parasuram, Mamu Govinda, Shumarud Kayeth and Balinarayan himself. The Mirza attacked them one by one and put them to flight. The Mirza had in his army, besides the Bengal forces, 4,000 Garos, at least 700 Rabhas and also a number of hill chiefs. These soldiers he recruited locally. The plains below the Garo Hills, particularly Amjunga, Rangjuli and later Ranihat were the main scenes of war which was fought for over nineteen months. A great part of his success Mirza Nathan owed to the aid of one Govinda of the village of Bachadhari, who was simply terrorized into submission for ^{safety of his} life by enacting a scene of massacre of captives before him. The details of the progress of the war were reported every week to the Khan Fath-jang. The Khan directed the imperial officer posted at Hajo not to show any negligence in sending reinforcements to the Mirza. Accordingly, Raja Satrajit proceeded to the assistance of the Mirza with one hundred horsemen and three hundred brave infantry.

The Mirza also attacked the hill-chiefs of the lower and higher hills and sent his predatory bands almost regularly to raid and plunder the peaceful hill-villages. In this respect, unlike the great Mughal generals like Mir Jumla, Mirza Nathan was a warrior devoid of any consideration and scruples. The hill-chiefs (Rajas) were disgusted with the Mirza for his savage treatment of their own people in the villages. These chiefs rebelled and quitted his camp and raised a strong fort at Ranihat appealing at the same time to the

Ahom king for help against the Mughuls. In the appeal the hill-chiefs said 'If you help us, we shall bar Mirza Nathan's progress towards the kingdom of Assam ;³⁸⁶ otherwise, if this year he becomes victorious over us, nothing will prevent him from destroying Assam next year'.³⁸⁷ In appreciation of this prospective danger the Ahom king despatched an expeditionary force of eighty thousand³⁸⁸ men under the command of the Hatibarua to the aid of the hill Rajas, and the Rajkhowa and the Khargharia Phukan were also attached to his company.³⁸⁹ Raja Baldev and Shumarud Kayeth, who had suffered several defeats and whose wives and children were now captives in the hands of the Mughuls, also accompanied the Ahom force.

The Mirza Expelled by The Ahoms from Dakshinkul :

The main fight between the Ahoms and the Mughuls led by Mirza Nathan took place in the new fort area of Ranihat. After a trial of strength with the Mughuls which took the form of siege and counter-siege of the respective forts in the area, the Ahoms operating from the Ranihat fort tried to encircle the Mughul forts by building a series of forts around them in the teeth of enemy opposition. There was no decisive victory for any side for some time.

386 Only the Ahom kingdom was called Assam in those days and the term Asham (Assamese) meant the Ahoms only.

387 BG.II, pp.571-72

388 This appears to be another exaggeration of the actual number by the Mughul writer.

389 BG.II, p.572. According to the Ahom account in AB,(p.105) the chief commanders sent were Labo Barua (probably Hatibarua), Langi Abhoipuria, Kalia Raidangia Barua and a few others.

For the delay in the conquest of the Muslims the Ahom king, Hso-Hseng-Hpa, severely censured the Hati Barua and other commanders and sent two hundred Hangdan Dharas (Ahom swordsmen) with the following orders - 'whoever falls back this time will be cut into two at the waist by the Hangdan Dharas'. The Ahom and allied commanders and Rajas then held a conference and decided upon a new plan of attack according to which they came out with their armies to a place situated on the side of Ganjbaib to the south-west of Ranihat at a distance of one big-cannon-shot from the imperial fort. There they erected within a night a lofty fort with a deep moat around and its walls and towers were mounted with cannon. More than fifty thousand men, it is said, were engaged in the construction of this ^{mighty} fort so close to the Mughul fort, but the Mughuls had ~~no~~ no scent of it till the work was completed. When the report of this danger ~~xxx~~ reached Mirza Nathan he also erected a defensive stockade with towers. In the meantime Kulij Khan, who was edicted to excessive drinking, was replaced by Shaykh Kamal to the Sardarship of the Thana of Hajo by the Subahdar of Bengal. The Mughuls could not defend their stockade and the Ahoms entered it and set fire to the houses within it. The Mughul army became so thoroughly demoralized by the Assamese attacks and strategy that it began to disperse and fall back from the front into their main forts in a state confusion and panic. The Ahom plan was to encircle the Mughul forts by an extension of the high fortification from one end of the hill

surrounding all the three forts of Mirza Nathan 'like the prey in a ring-hunt'. All people in the Mughul camp felt themselves doomed to death and decided to perform jawhar and die after killing their wives. The Assamese then shouted thus :- 'Soldiers of the imperial army, behold, how we have surrounded you. If you want to live, the best course for you is to surrender to our Raja of Assam ; otherwise, we shall not allow even a bird of yours to escape and we shall make a general massacre'.³⁹⁰ In this doomed condition the Mirza made the Musalmans take an oath by the Qu'ran and the Hindus in his camp take the same according to Hindu custom, to the effect that they should not leave one another's company and should accept martyrdom following one another's foot-steps. The Ahom plan was not to fall upon the imperialists all at once, which would mean a considerable loss of life to their own side also, so long as the enemies had any effective power of resistance, but to exhaust them and their gun-powder and bullets by a long-range attack to be intensified as the enemies become weaker. The effect of it they clearly foresaw when the imperialists were shut up from the outside world without supply. From hour to hour therefore the Assamese became more and more aggressive, and gun-powder, bullets and cannon balls of the Mirza's army ran short. The Assamese spies carried this news from time to time to their chiefs. In spite of the solemn resolve not to leave one

390 BG. II, pp. 585-87, 596.

another many dispirited men of the Mirza's camp deserted from the fort at night through certain escape routes. Many again, in utter helplessness, performed jawhar inside the fort. The defence of the Mughuls completely collapsed. The Mirza himself sent away at night some of his women on an elephant under the escort of two trusted officers. He also transferred most of the artillery by means of other elephants, thus disarming the defenders of the fort. But soon after day-break the Assamese rushed from all sides, broke into the fort of Mirza Nathan and started killing the enemies inside it. There was no other alternative for the Mughuls but to fight the losing battle or perform jawhar. In fact the Mughul army was literally massacred. The Assamese also set fire to the fort and the foot soldiers cut off the legs of innumerable horses and men in the camp. It is dramatically described by the author of the Baharistan-i-Ghaybi how at the last moment the great warrior Mirza Nathan and four other officers alone forced their way out through the formidable cordon of the vast besieging army. The Mirza, joined by a few more companions, escaped to the north bank of the Brahmaputra by means of boats timely sent by Satrajit, who commanded the navy in this campaign. The Mirza first fled to Sualkuchi and thence to Ramdiya. He did not go to Hajo, the Mughul head-quarters, as he looked upon Shaykh Kamal, the Sardar or Military Administrator, as his foe.

A large number of men and officers of the Mughul camp fled towards Hajo hotly chased by the Ahoms and their

Koch and tribal allies, but for want of boats many were drowned in the Brahmaputra. The Ahoms gained from the victory two brass cannon, eight large cannon, twenty-seven hand-guns, a pair of shields, sixty horses, a drum and other things.³⁹¹ All these were brought to the king at Garhgaon. Mirza Nathan's flight from the Dakshinkul after his disastrous defeat at the hands of the Ahoms not only undid the hard-earned results of his earlier successes against the Koch rebels and the hill-Rajas but also seriously affected the prestige of the Mughuls in the east.

Mirza Nathan next attempted to retrieve his lost prestige by recruiting a force at Ramdiya and raising a loan at Gilabnay and invading afresh the Dakshinkul early in A.D. 1620. From Jummria he sent some booties including elephants to the Subahdar of Bengal. He conquered the fort of the rebels at Minari and constantly raided the hill-villages for supplies. One consequence of these plundering raids was that an insurrection broke out in Khuntaghat, to suppress which Nathan was deputed after investing him with the Sardarship of the expedition. His force, among others, had 140 Firingis (Europeans). At Hangrabari, the Ahoms, who appeared on invitation from Shumarud, defeated the Mughuls killing seven hundred brave men of the cavalry and infantry of the Mirza. It is mentioned in Beharistan-i-Ghaybi (pp. 623-24) that the Ahoms effectively checked the galloping charge of the Mughul cavalry by

³⁹¹ AB, pp. 105-6; DAB, 61-62.

setting a big net before it and they also used a kind of rocket-like weapon called chandrebang. It is said that Satrajit, out of hatred for Mirza Nathan, instigated Shumarud to call in the Ahoms who took the opportunity to strike this blow on the Muslims. Though Nathan claims to have succeeded in capturing Shumarud and subduing the hill-chiefs his hold on the Dakshinkul was only temporary. This second invasion of Nathan finds no mention in the Buranjis of Assam.

The Koch princes and the frontier Rajas then went to Garhgaon and paid their grateful homage to Chao-Hpa Hso-Hseng and the latter wanted all to join the Ahoms in a general campaign against the Mughuls. The king also sent the frontier chiefs by giving them choicest presents to be prepared for it. Now it was at this stage that Raja Lakshminarayan offered to mediate for peace between the Ahoms and the Mughuls and sent Biru Qazi to Garhgaon with this mission in the summer of 1620.

Mamu Govinda And Satrajit :

It appears that Mirza Nathan's second invasion of Dakshinkul did not give him any permanent hold on that region against the constant pressure of the Ahoms. For sometime between A.D. 1620 and 1627 Mamu Govinda, uncle of Parikshit and the chief (Barua) of Beltala, became a feudatory ruler of that region with Karaibari as its western boundary under the Ahom king. This was possible because Mamu was an ally of the Ahoms in fighting the Mughuls. Satrajit, the naval commander

of the Mughals and a friend of Shaykh Kamal attempted an invasion of Dakshinkul, but the timely arrival of 2,000 kadis (archers) from the Ahom kingdom in aid of Manu warded off the danger. Satrajit next made friendship with the Bar-Phukan and secretly communicated with king Hso-Hseng-Hpa through the latter apparently making his submission by professions of filial obedience. Satrajit also sent his wife and his ten years old son to pay homage to the Ahom king.³⁹² Mamu's good relations with Dharmanarayan (Balinarayan) were lost when the latter put his son Madhu Nayak to death for rebellion. Both Dharmanarayan and the Ahom king repeatedly summoned Manu Govinda to their presence, but Manu, feeling insecure after what had happened to his son, refused to leave Luki where he took refuge at the instance of the Bar-Phukan. He was also suspected of making overtures to the Nawab of Dacca and transmitting secrets of Assam to him.

Satrajit being aware of this estrangement of Mamu Govinda wrote to the Ahom king volunteering to seize the refractory chief and despatch him to Garhgaon. The king then sent Ratna Kandali, Jabar Khari and Ekadah to fetch Mamu and gave permission to Satrajit to proceed to capture him. Mamu was soon surrounded from the east by the Ahoms and from the west by

³⁹² BBB, pp.108-9. The date of Satrajit's wife's visit to Garhgaon is mentioned in this Chronicle as Sak.1553, Chaitra (A.D. 1631) which appears to be post-dated by about 3 years when compared with the Tai-Ahom Buranjī. See AB, p.110 ; DAB, p.64. According to DAB, (p.64) there were two meetings of the Bar-Phukan, and it was only at the second meeting that the Bar-Phukan went prepared to seize Raja Satrajit.

Satrajit. But he escaped to Bengal where he was seized by Satrajit and sent to the Nawab of Dacca, Abdul Islam, not to Garhgaon.³⁹³ His wife and children, whom he had left behind, were removed to Jakhali. Satrajit now proved faithless to the Ahom king and the latter advised the Viceroy of Lower Assam to capture him by any means and inform.³⁹⁴ The Bar-Phukan succeeded in arranging a meeting through Bhelai with Raja Satrajit on the sands of Umananda apparently for mutual friendship. The Raja, however, came with proper security guards in sixty boats. The Bar-Phukan, accompanied by other officers, proceeded down from Kajali with one hundred and five boats. Both the chiefs very cordially received each other by embraces, sat on the same carpet, talked and exchanged presents.³⁹⁵ But Satrajit, suspecting the show of freindship by the Bar-Phukan to be an affectation, was all the time on guard. After a brief talk he rose and hurriedly sailed off to Hajo and the Bar-Phukan, too, returned to Kajali failing to seize him.

Three Mudois And Ambassadors From Dacca :

On another occasion three traders named Sonari Mudoi, Narahari Mudoi and Joyhari Mudoi, doing trading business at

³⁹³ Kamrupar Buranji, p.30 ; AB - 'SMJC', p.66 ; BBB, p.110. Abdul Islam is mentioned in BBB as the Nawab of Dacca at that time.

³⁹⁴ Kamrupar Buranji, p.29 ; BBB, p.110 ; AB - 'SMJC', p.64.

³⁹⁵ AB - 'SMJC', p.65 ; AB, p.110. But Kamrupar Buranji (p.29) says that Satrajit met the Bar-Phukan and talked with him from his boat in fear of the Ahoms and did not come out of his boat to the beach.

Sri Suryya, volunteered to help in settling peace with Assam and communicated the same to the Nawab of Dacca. The Nawab agreed and sent with them his own ambassadors, Bazit Khan and Gopal, as a peace mission to the Ahom Court to request the king to allow him to establish a hat (exchange mart) at the mouth of the Sonkosh. They carried with them necessary credentials, plenty of presents and an epistle from the Nawab addressed to the Ahom king. They arrived at Kurua and Sonari Mudoï informed the Bar-Phukan at Kajali about it. But Satrajit, who had learnt about the arrival of the Dacca mission, immediately dissuaded the Bar-Phukan from entertaining it as it would eventually lead to the disclosure of all that he had been doing in Assam, including his own peace moves, without proper authority from the Bengal Governor. His ulterior object was to play off the Ahoms against the Mughuls for his gain in position in Kamrup. The Bar-Phukan at his instance made a travesty of the peace mission and informed the king that Sonari Mudoï, after reporting to the Muslim Governor at Dacca all about the internal affairs of the Ahom kingdom, had come leading a Bengal embassy with necessary ambassadorial papers to make peace with the Svargadev. The king could not tolerate such meddlesomeness in politics on the part of traders and remarked that 'he is a trader and should therefore mind his business of trade alone, why should he bring Bengal ambassadors?' With the king's orders all the three traders were executed at Kurua and the Bengal ambassadors were sent back

from that place.³⁹⁶

Fall Of The First Bar-Phukan :

The Ahom king was very much dissatisfied with his viceroy, Langi Bar-Phukan, who failed properly to discharge the responsibilities of his high office. When the king learnt more about the way in which he handled the affairs of Lower Assam he charged him on three counts : First he failed to seize Satrajit though the latter came and met him. The allegation against the Bar-Phukan by the other officers of Lower Assam was that he did not seize Satrajit as that would have destroyed the friendship built up between them ; secondly, he had sent Mamu Govinda to Luki with the object of creating a rupture between him and Dharmanarayan ; and thirdly, he deliberately misrepresented the embassy that had been sent from Dacca and did not send to the king the presents brought by them. Hence the king punished the Bar-phukan and his associate Parbatia Barua with death by starvation. Next Bar-Phukan appointed ~~xxx~~ was Abhoypuria Neog Gohain (called also Neog's son), who assumed charge in August, 1631.³⁹⁷

396 AB - 'SMJC', pp.66-67 ; Kamrupar Buranji, pp.27-28, BBB, p.110-111.

397 AB - 'SMJC', p.67 ; Kamrupar Buranji, p.30 ; AB, p.110 ; BBB, 111. Here there is mention of three Dangarias (nobles) being punished with death. Neog Gohain Bar-Phukan was also called 'Neogar Putek Bar-Phukan, see.DAB, p.69.

War With The Mughuls Renewed (1637-41) :

In the next year the king also reconstructed the fort of Marangi and strengthened it by transferring many people to that area from Abhoipur, Dihing and Namdang. With these new settlements the king appointed Kan-Seng Barpatra's grandson Akhek as Marangikhowa Gohain (Governor of Marangi). Frictions with the Mughuls on the western border continued to occur. About A.D. 1635 a number of Hindu chiefs including Gabharu Ray and Harikesh came over to the Ahom side and sought protection of the Svargadev. Nawab Abdul Islam of Dacca demanded the extradition of Harikesh who had owed to him rupees five hundred. The Ahom king refused to hand over a person who had submitted to him for protection and, in this respect, reminded the Nawab of his action of not returning the offender, Mamu Govinda, who had fled to Bengal.³⁹⁸ Then Shaykh Farid and Mamud proceeded up the Barlia (Baraliya) to seize Harikesh but were chased out of the Ahom territories by Kalanchu Handikoi. These incidents developed high tension in the Ahom-Mughul relations, which, not long after, broke out again into open warfare.

In the meantime, knowing that major operations would be necessary to clear the land of the Muslim menace, king Hso-Hseng-Hpa, in the spring of 1637, ordered the son of Neog Phukan (Bar-Phukan) to summon all the frontier Rajas.

398 BBB, p.112 ; Kamrupar Buranji, p.34.

and chiefs³⁹⁹ to Kajali and inform them of the king's desire that they should all proceed against the Muslims with their regiments in the company of the Ahom army. Accordingly, the summons were issued, the Rajas and chiefs assembled and held a war council at Kajali and at the appointed time marched against the Muslims. The combined army, under the supreme command of the new Bar-Phukan attacked and drove back the Mughuls from the areas of Pandu, Saraighat and Agiathuti to Hajo. It was discovered that there were European mercenaries in the Mughul army. The naval force of the enemy retreated to Sualkuchi. But the Muslims made attacks from time to time on Saraighat and Pandu, but they were all repulsed. While conducting operations from a high ground at Amarajuri the Neog Bar-Phukan was killed by an enemy bullet which shot through his mouth. When the king received this news he appointed General Lan-Mong-Shen⁴⁰⁰ as the next Bar-Phukan with supreme command over the army and the navy and Lasham Barua as the naval commander under him. In a bloody battle on Majuli between Pandu and Hajo, in which the Ahoms used guns and cross-bows besides other arms, the Muslims were defeated with heavy casualties and forced to retreat to Sualkuchi. At Sualkuchi

399 The names of the Rajas and chiefs were 1. Dharma Raja (Dharmanarayan) of the Koch country, 2. Dimarua Raja, 3. Hangarabaria Raja, 4. Hojai Raja, 5. Gukar Raja, 6. Man Singha Raja, 7. Haladhibaria Raja, 8. Bamun Raja, 9. Barduraia Raja, 10. Kantam Raja, 11. Mogor Raja, 12. Rup Sing Raja and other minor chiefs. These Rajas and chiefs all received presents ~~at the king~~ and went to their principalities to prepare for the war. See AB, p.113 ; DAB, p.66.

400 Lanmakharu or Haladhithenga Bar-Phukan of Assamese Buranjis.

a Firingi (European),⁴⁰¹ who came out of his fort and fired his gun, was made captive by the Ahoms, who, hearing the report of his gun, rushed at him frustrating his attempt to escape. This was the first European ever captured by the Ahoms and taken to Garhgaon and presented to the king.

On request from the Bar-Phukan the king sent a strong naval squadron of sixty large ships and ten thousand men consisting of the king's own picked archers and gunners under the command of able officers. The whole force with the land army assembled near the enemy fort at Sualkuchi, where Satrajit was at his post with his army, and laid siege to it. The Muslims made a number of unsuccessful attempts to break the siege with the result that great many of them lost their lives. Those who escaped alive fled away. Satrajit himself fled with one hundred ships pursued by the Assamese up to Kalahimukh (Koolsi-mukh). One officer named Bajit Khan was captured alive while he was dashing out of the fort. The fort fell to the Ahoms. A frantic naval attack was made by a Muslim commander, called Khankhana, with sixty boats, but he was defeated and forty of the boats, laden with provisions, captured by the Ahoms. The enemies were pursued to Chandrakoth. The Ahoms seized three hundred ships, three hundred large and small guns and other materials.⁴⁰²

⁴⁰¹ AB, p.118 ; DAB, p.71.

⁴⁰² AB, pp.118-19 ; DAB, p.71 ; Kamrupar Buranji, p.36.

Battle Of Hajo : Mughul Head-quarters Devastated, 1636 :

Having captured Sualkuchi the Ahoms next besieged and attacked the Mughul fort at Hajo. The Ahoms made such a powerful assault on the fort that the Nawabs Muhudi (the chief of Hajo) and Abdul Islam of Bengal were wounded, and their elephant receiving bullet shots ran back. A great confusion reigned in the Mughul camp and many attempted to escape from the besieged fort, but they were all surrounded and their supplies cut off. The Mughuls began to die of starvation. At last Nawab Muhudi came out of the fort and surrendered to Lan-Mong-Shen (Lanmakharu) Bar-Phukan followed by Nawab Abdul Islam and other high officers. They were all sent as prisoners to Garhgaon. The Mughul head-quarters of Hajo were then devastated and many Muslims captured and a large booty acquired by the Ahoms. According to Kamrupar Burenji (pp.36-37) the date of this Ahom victory over the Mughuls was Magh, Sak 1558 (i.e. A.D. 1637). The Ahoms and their Koch and hills allies also made a series of successful attacks on the enemy forts of Nimisa, Rabhikundh, Shonda⁴⁰³ and other places forcing the Muslim and Hindu forces of Bengal to retreat. Itakhuli and Saraighat had already been occupied by the Ahom officers, Lai-Phang-Jeng and Lasham Phukan respectively.

403 Shonda (Sandha) is about 16 miles north of Hajo.

Subsequent Developments :

In the spring of 1639 the king ordered the Bar-Phukan Lan-Mong-Shen, Khangla (Khanglai Chetia) and Raja Dharmanarayan to capture Uttam, who was at Hajo commanding a force for the Muslims. Gait points out that Uttamnarayan was a Zamindar of Barnagar in Kamrup. But the latter fled to Bengal and under the Bar-Phukan's orders the Assamese set fire to the buildings and properties including a granary. It is stated Lan-Mong-Shen setting aside the orders of the king removed twenty families⁴⁰⁴ of Sualkuchi and established them at Bamunkuchi. For this disobedience he was replaced by Chiring Piksai as Bar-Phukan who was stationed at Pandu as the supreme commander of its garrison. The new Bar-Phukan on assuming charge further extended the conquests on both banks of the Brahmaputra and captured several important strategic posts of the Mughuls. On the north bank, being driven off from Hajo, the Muslims took their stand at Madhupur, about 16 miles north-west of Hajo, but even from there they were forced to fall back to Barpeta. The Assamese made their forts at Nimisa and Kalapani and made a series of attacks on Muhammad Zaman, the Faujdar of Sylhet, who arrived with reinforcements. About the beginning of A.D. 1640 the Muslims

404 According to AB - 'SMJC', (p.70) fifty families of weavers were transferred to Dakshinkul and settled there and the Bar-Phukan seized from them all the silk cloth woven by them for the Padshah but did not send it to Svargadev.

evacuated Jakhlikhane and retreated to their next post at Bhatakuchi (Bhatkuchi).

In the autumn of 1640 three Katakis Ratna Kandali, Madhav Kandali and Birina gave an adverse report to the king about the Bar-Phukan. They said that the Bar-Phukan had no capacity to conduct the affairs of his office efficiently. It is said that earlier these three Katakis had asked the Bar-Phukan for some gifts, but met with a refusal and since then they maintained a grudge against him. At the receipt of the report the king ordered that the Bar-Phukan be arrested and chained and brought to Garhgaon.⁴⁰⁵ In the Tai-Ahom record the offence is pointed out to be that he acted whimsically without regard for the directions of the king in conducting wars. In Sak 1559 (A.D. 1637) one Langu alias Saruchakua Gohain, son of Khampet (Khamprat) Bar-Gohain, was then appointed as Bar-Phukan and was directed to make his camp at Pandu.

During the Bar-Phukanship of Langu the enemy fort at Bhatakuchi was captured by the Ahoms. In a battle there the Muslims suffered heavy casualties. At this stage Lasham Barua and the brother (Palonga ?) of Langu fled to Bengal, but were fettered and put into prison by the Bengal Subahdar. The Muslims now received reinforcements from Bengal under the command of Mirza Zahina (i.e. Mir Zainud-Din, brother of Islam Khan) assisted by Allah Yar Khan and defeated the Ahoms, who

also ran short of ammunition, at Barepaita. Several Ahom officers fell fighting at that place.⁴⁰⁶ Langu was found inexperienced⁴⁰⁷ and hence removed from Bar-Phukanship. In his place two officers, Chaongu and the Marangikhowa Gohain were sent to Pandu which was being firmly held by the Ahoms since the time of Satrajit's retreat from there. After Barepaita the Muslims advanced with strength pushing back the Ahoms from Hajo and Agiathuti to Saraighat. In a naval engagement near Pandu the Ahoms were equally worsted. Gait says that some five hundred sloops of war and three hundred guns fell into the hands of the victors. The Muslims continued to push forward upto Kajalimukh where they raised a fort, but it was soon captured by Hari Deka and Marua Kenwar. In face of these developments the king repaired and strengthened the fortifications of Kaliabar. He also sent his three ministers (Gohains) to oppose the Muslims at the Kajali fort and soon after them sent also the Bar-Barua, Momai-Tamuli, with a force to that fort. The Bar-Gohain, the Bura-Gohain and the Barpatra-Gohain actually did not come to Kajalimukh. An attempt by the Muslims to capture the Kajali fort was foiled by the Bar-Barua. This success encouraged the Bar-Gohain, the Bura-Gohain and the Barpatra-Gohain to march against the Muslims with their large cannon and other weapons and a number of boats, but to every body's surprise,

406 AB - 'SMJC', p.71.

407 According to the version in AB - 'SMJC', (p.72) he suffered from rheumatism and hence could not become very active.

at the approach of the Muslims by boats the army fled away leaving their cannon and boats. From the beginning to end these Gohains were acting in contravention of the king's directions and suffered the loss. In the flight Balinarayan (Dharmanarayan), the Raja of Darrang, was hotly pursued by the invaders. He was isolated and killed in the neighbourhood of Singari Parbat.

Battle Of The Bharali, 1638 :

All retreated to Kaliabar and Samdhara. The Gohains were simply reproved by the king for their irresponsible conduct and were next ordered to proceed to the fort at Samdhara. An important battle was fought on the banks of the Bharali. In A.D. 1638 (Kapleo) the Muslims, advancing both by land and water, reached the mouth of the Bharali river and erected a fort adjacent to the fort of the Ahoms. At the time fortifications undertaken by the Ahoms were yet to be completed. The Bar-Barua suggested at the Council of Nobles a resort to a dilatory course so as to gain time to complete the works. With the consent of all he sent envoys to the Muslim camp making an enquiry as to ^{the} object of their coming. If they came for war the matter might be plainly stated through the envoys. The Muslim general's reply was that they were prepared to go back without war to their country if 'elephants of their jungles, aloes wood, pepper and gold' he offered to them. The nobles then took time to send the proposal to the king and get the reply. In the meantime, the fortification works

were expedited and completed. Thereafter the nobles, as already planned, communicated to the Muslim general the king's positive refusal to give anything of the kind.⁴⁰⁸ Then after a few days of daily skirmishes the Muslims made a major attack on the Ahom fort with elephants, horses and war-boats, but were repulsed and four of their boats destroyed. Next morning they made a heavy attack on the Bura-Gohain's fort and the battle raged for the whole day. A vast number of Muslims fell dead with only twenty men killed in the fort of the Bura-Gohain. The following morning the Muslims crossed the Bharali and built a fort very close to the Ahom fort. In the meantime reinforcements arrived from Garhgaon. In the morning of the fourth day the Muslims came out of their fort and made a powerful attack on the forts of the Ahom Generals at Samdhara. The Koch king Prannarayan accompanied the Mughul army. This was their last bid for victory. The battle was fought with unabated fury for the whole day and the ditches were filled up with the dead bodies of the Muslims. For two more days the Muslims fought with great losses to themselves, but being heavily defeated by the Ahoms they retired to Gauhati where, after placing Allah Yar Khan in charge of Kamrup as Faujdar, Mirza Zahina sailed down to his country.

The Ahoms advanced in the winter of 1639 to Kajali-mukh and took their station there.⁴⁰⁹ In this campaign the

408 AB - 'SMJC', pp.72-73.

409 AB - 'SMJC', the Bharali battle and the Ahoms' reoccupation of the Kajali fort are antedated by 3 years. But the dates in AB appear to be systematic.

supreme command was vested in Piksai Chetia for the north bank and in Momai Tamuli Bar-Barua for the south bank. After this victory king Hso-Hseng-Hpa wanted to snatch an opportunity to make peace for a few years not only for rest and recuperation of the country after twelve years of almost incessant fighting, but also to make up for the exhaustion of war materials in the stock to meet fresh challenge. They therefore opened negotiation with Allah Yar Khan and in A.D. 1639 a treaty was concluded whereby the Bar Nadi on the north and Asurar Ali on the south bank were fixed as the boundary between the Ahom and Mughul territories.⁴¹⁰ This was a momentous settlement of the Ahom-Mughul boundary problem though it ~~which~~ became a bone of contention in subsequent developments.

It may be noted that Raja Satrajit lost the confidence of the Mughul Subahdar of Bengal by his nefarious activities and secret deals with the Ahom authorities. He was captured at Dhubri, tried and executed at Jahangirnagar (Dacca).

Bhutan Frontier Settlement :

On the death of Dharmanarayan in A.D. 1638 his son Sundarnarayan was made Raja of Darrang in A.D. 1639 by the Ahom king with the Bar Nadi as the western boundary of his territory. Sundarnarayan established his residence at Mangaldoi. He was a capricious ruler who by his wild acts and projects,

⁴¹⁰ Ibid, pp.73-74. A good narrative of the Mughul-Ahom war of the period is given in AB and also in Padishah-namah.

offended even his subjects and attendants. He carried on depredations into ~~the~~ Satdooar⁴¹¹ and plundered the villages and seized the lands belonging to the Raja of Bhutan.⁴¹² The people and the Bhutanese chiefs of Satdooar asserted their rights over the districts to the north of the Gohain Kamalar Ali, but agreed to make the usual presents of musks and cow-tails (Sowar) to the Raja of Darrang and to pay the stated tribute of horses, cow-tails, musks and blankets to Svargadev. Sundarnarayan consented to it. Such alienation of Darrang territory, which was a part of the Ahom dominions, was resented by the Ahom king who sent a force to take possession of the border lands as far as Bhoomoorakundah and directed Sundarnarayan to join it in an action against the Bhutanese. There was a border war for seven months with the Bhutanese who advanced on horseback. The Bhutanese were defeated and sued for peace with offer of tributes, such as gold dust cow-tails and horses. But they represented to the Ahom king their demand praying for a grant of the seven dooars and

411 In his Among the Himalayas Major L.A. Waddell defines dooars as 'passes' i.e. shallow passes or entrances from the plains into the hills. These shallow valleys or dooars are usually estimated at 18 in number, of which 11 lie on the frontier of Bengal and the other seven are on the corresponding frontier of Assam. (pp.289-90, 436). Robinson says that the 'duwars' (dooars) were assigned to the hill-chieftains, who were responsible to the Ahom king for the peace of those tracts. There was another term desh with a similar meaning used for certain tracts on the south bank and they are 'Desh Dumuria, Desh Panbari, Desh Beltalla and Desh Rani and nine dooars. (See his Descriptive Account of Assam, p.283 etc.).

412 Wade's Account of Assam, p.225.

seven districts belonging to Bhutan. An agreement was eventually signed with usual formalities. The Bhutanese chiefs of the docars agreed to pay the annual tribute for the ceded country as far as the Gohain Kamalar Ali which was fixed as the southern limit. The Darrangi Raja's territory was also strictly defined with the Dhansiri on the east, the Gohain Kamalar Ali on the north and the Bar Nadi on the west.⁴¹³ Sundarnarayan was accused of alienating the king's domain and was therefore deprived of his right over the province of Kamrup, which was immediately put under the charge of the Bar-Phukan. The Raja was granted one hundred and sixty 'got paiks' by the Ahom king.⁴¹⁴

Hso-Hseng-Hpa's Character and Achievements :

Chao Hso-Hseng-Hpa was one of the greatest kings of the early period of the Tai-Ahom rule in Assam. Though he became king at an advanced age of about fifty-eight, yet he ruled for nearly forty years - one of the longest reigns - maintaining the vigour of his mind and body to the end and was one of the most beloved of his subjects who prayed for his long life. He was a contemporary of ^{the Mughul} Emperors, Jahangir and Shah Jahan, whose ambition it was to push the frontiers of the Mughul Empire to the farthest limit in the east. Lakshminarayan's approach for help in A.D. 1608 gave Jahangir the desired opportunity to bring the Koch kingdoms of Koch Behar and Kamrup

⁴¹³ Ibid., p.230.

⁴¹⁴ Ibid., p.231.

under his heels thereby reaching at once the borders of the Ahom kingdom. Hso-Hseng-Hpa could forestall the destiny of the Koch kingdoms from the internecine wars between Parikshit and Lakshminarayan and eventual imperialist expansion of the Mughuls to the Ahom border. He therefore closed up his war with the Kacharis by effecting a friendly settlement and became ready to meet the more dangerous enemy, the mighty Mughuls. He devoted all attention to the reorganization of the country's manpower and resources so as to be able to place on the field a well-trained and efficient army. When the Mughuls, after having swept across the Koch territories started invasions of the Ahom kingdom, they found the Ahoms unlike the Koches too tough and capable of dealing hard blows. The recuperative vigour of this race was such that particular reverses, such as that at Hajo, could not cow down their spirit and doggedness of tenacity in continuing to fight to the finish.

King Hso-Hseng-Hpa's experiences from his wars with the Mughuls dictated the necessity of certain elaborate and fundamental reforms in the entire administrative system. He created two very important posts, those of the Bar-Phukan and Bar-Barua, the first being essentially a functionary in charge of the defence of Lower Assam and of diplomatic relations with foreign ^{countries} ~~country~~ of the west and the second being a functionary ^{immediately} at the head of the secretariat and the judiciary ~~under~~ the king. A census of the population was taken and where this

had not been done already the people were grouped into clans with officers appointed over them.⁴¹⁵ The common free population, which was regimented for civil and military purposes, was neatly divided into brigades of one thousand men or paiks each commanded by a Hazarika and a gradation of other subordinate officers. Under the Hazarika were for instance, the Saikias and Baras. A Saikia, as the term denotes, commands one hundred and a Bara commands twenty men (paiks) respectively. In addition there were Neogs, Phukans and Rajkhowas who held more important positions.⁴¹⁶ He introduced certain innovations in the field of land settlements. He divided the territory of the kingdom into twelve districts (or provinces). He assigned to the Bar-Gohain, the Bura-Gohain and the Barpatra-Gohain for their exclusive enjoyment certain well-defined areas or districts.⁴¹⁷ The king transferred the Bhuyans to the Dakshinkul by abolishing their Uttarkul (North bank) settlements between the Bharali and the Sobansiri rivers ; for, since Naranarayan's invasion of Assam these Bhuyans, it is alleged, stopped payment of tributes to the Ahom king and one Bhuyan, named Uday, even

⁴¹⁵ Gait : op.cit., p.119.

⁴¹⁶ AB - 'SMJC', p.76. Ru-ring, Hazarika, Ru-pak, Saikia, Ru-sao, Bara, Phu-kin-mong, Rajkhowa, Phu-kan, Phukan, Niu-chan, Neog. Tai-Ahom was then the language of the Royal Court. The Assamese forms of these official titles were rendered from Tai-Ahom. This organizational pattern is not to be understood to have been first introduced by Hso-Hseng-Hpa. As noted above, it was there in much earlier times in the Tai kingdom of Nan-Chao.

⁴¹⁷ AB - 'SMJC', p.76 ; Tr. 8d (DHAS), p.45 for the belaits, or districts, that were formed.

revolted and declared his independence. This transfer considerably reduced the power of the Bhuyans.⁴¹⁸ A similar transfer of eight thousand families, in the order of one family out of twenty, from Upper Assam to the sparsely populated border area of Marangi was made building it up into a town in order to strengthen the defence of the country on the Kachari frontier.⁴¹⁹ In planning and executing all these various reforms the king had the assistance of his talented key man, Momai Tamuli Bar-Barua.⁴²⁰ While at Kaliabar, once the Bar-Phukan was addressed in a diplomatic epistle as Manjani Raja⁴²¹ by the Kachari Raja Indrabal-narayan. Though the Bar-Phukan took exception to being called Raja, the Ahom king took pride at his viceroy being given such a high compliment by another Raja.

Hso-Hseng-Hpa's reign is notable for the development of backward tracts and construction of many important roads, embankments, tanks and forts. He reconstructed the impregnable fortifications of Samdhara under his direct supervision. When completed they extended on the north bank

⁴¹⁸ Ibid, p.76-77 ; Gait : op.cit., p.119.

⁴¹⁹ AB - 'SMJC', p.68.

⁴²⁰ The name Momai is from Tai Mu, areca-nut and mai, weed out, trim up. The story is that this particular man of the Lukhrakhan family raised a beautiful and well-trimmed areca-nut garden. The king happened to pass by it and was impressed by the sight of the well-ordered garden. He then rewarded the owner, who was from that time called Momai, and appointed him as his Tamuli, an attendant who takes care of the king's own areca-nut garden and prepares and serves betel-nut to him. From that humble job, in which this man's great merit was observed by the king, he was rapidly raised to the position of the Bar-Barua.

⁴²¹ Probably same as nam-dani, meaning the plains near the highlands or hills. Here it means namani-Raja or the Raja of Lower Assam.

from the Lohit to the Samdhara Hill and on the south from the Lohit to Bhayaraguri. Sola was fortified by the Bar-Barua again in A.D. 1620 with its ramparts extending from the Chandi Temple to Kapalikati on the north bank and from the Lohit it was joined to the Pakariguri Hill⁴²² on the south. Under orders of the king the Bar-Barua also constructed the temples of Visvanath and Dergaon. In A.D. 1617 the king excavated the well-known Mechagharh tank and consecrated it to the God of Heaven (Lengdon) on the Sankranti day of Magh according to the Tai-Ahom custom by sacrificing cows and buffaloes.⁴²³ It is said that the king, in high appreciation of Momai Tamuli's construction of the ramparts at Banhgarah and the Singha-Dooar (Lion-Gate) of Garhgaon, made him the first Bar-Barua.⁴²⁴ In A.D. 1632 a road was built connecting the hills with the town of Mekurikhowa, and in the next year made the La-doi garh of the Nam-dang. Thereafter southern defence outposts were strengthened by raising ramparts called Dopdarar garh, to the inside of which the Nagas had no access except when escorted by the Chaodangs. An exchange-mart was also established there for the benefit of the Nagas and the people of the plains.⁴²⁵ The king also built as many as twelve towns and they were the towns of Darika, Mathurapur, ~~xxx~~ the hill

422 different from one on the north bank.

423 AB - 'SMJC', p.61.

424 Ibid, p.64. (also Tr. 84. p.29).

425 Ibid, p.68.

(not identified), Taokak, Garhgaon, Gajpur, Abhaypur, Mekurikhowa, Chinatali, Namdang, Meragarh and Sakbari.⁴²⁶

The foreigners who came to Assam were registered. During Hso-Hseng-Hpa's reign the names of those persons, who came from Bhati or Namraiya to Assam with their families apparently to settle here, are in record. They were Manik Kath, Kshetriya, Bhatta Guru, Srestha, Jayantiram, Patranasi, Bengal Chakravarty, Jadunandan Mishra and Kengpatra. In addition Chandrai Barkath, Chaliha and Malraj came from Kamrup Dhekeri. As diplomatic intercourse rapidly developed with Decca and other Eastern Indian States the king selected from among the Hindus, particularly Brahmins, of his kingdom such persons as were found competent to act as envoys or ambassadors by reason of their knowledge of the languages, customs and cultures of those countries. The names of as many as eighteen such persons are known to have served the Ahom Court as envoys and ambassadors and they were 1. Dharadhar, 2. Bar Kandali, 3. Chota Kandali, 4. Sagar Kandali, 5. Chandi Guru, 6. Thakari Gopal, 7. Gopal Kataki, 8. Ratna Kandali, 9. Ekadah, 10. Madhav Kandali, 11. Birna (or Birina), 12. Sitalial, 13. Srikanta, 14. Sonabar, 15. Nirah, 16. Sanatan, 17. Narayan and 18. Raj Guru.⁴²⁷

King Hso-Hseng-Hpa's reign was marked by certain unforeseen happenings. In A.D. 1618 his palace was struck by lightning and partly burnt. Again in A.D. 1621 his Temple of

⁴²⁶ Ibid, p.76.

⁴²⁷ Tr. 84. (DHAS), p.45.

Chum-Seng (Chumdeo) was struck by lightning and damaged. In the same year the Visvanath Temple on the ^{north} bank was partly charred by lightning stroke and had therefore to be rebuilt by the Bar-Barua. There was also an epidemic of cattle disease in the year 1618 causing death to innumerable cows and buffaloes. Constant wars and the cattle disease led to a brief period of food shortage and growth of famine conditions.

Hso-Hseng-Hpa was inexorable in the enforcement of discipline and cowardice or disobedience on the part of his officers was severely dealt with. Though himself not a Hindu he was tolerant of the Hindu religion. He looked to the interest of common people. On hearing complaints from the weavers, goldsmiths and other people against the Bhandari Gohain and his sons that the latter were oppressing the people and were of depraved character the king enquired into the grievances and being satisfied executed the offenders. The great king, Hso-Hseng-Hpa, died of illness at his ripe old age in A.D. 1641.

18. Hso-Ram-Hpa (1641-1644) :

At the time of Hso-Hseng-Hpa's death his three sons were present at his bed side. The youngest son, Chao-Shai, conspired to seize the throne but his attempt was foiled by the second brother, Chao-Hpa Hso-Ching. The eldest son, Prince Hso-Ram-Hpa, was reluctant to ascend the throne as he had

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'no sons or grandsons'. The choice of the ministers and nobles fell on the second prince, but the latter refused to be king when his elder brother was alive.⁴²⁸ Chao-Hpa Hso-Ram was at last installed as the king.

It was soon found that this king was unworthy of the throne. He was weak and depraved and suffered from mental perversion. He was not ashamed to live with his step-mother as man and wife.⁴²⁹ He brought into his palace a woman married to a Chutiya and made her his queen. She adopted a boy of her former husband's elder brother and influenced the king to agree to her adopted son being made king after him.⁴³⁰ But to the relief of the nobles of the Court, who were indignant at such a preposterous proposal, the adopted son died before the king. The queen's allegation was that it was Hso-Ching-Hpa's son, Lapet alias Laplap Cohain, who had poisoned her adopted son to death. This led to a friction between the king and his brother.⁴³¹ The king was overwhelmed with grief at the death of his pet child and asked the three ministers, the Phukans and the Baruas to offer a boy of each to be buried along with the deceased son. His brother Hso-Ching-Hpa warned the king against pressing such a demand, but the foolish king still insisted on it. "We never hear of such a thing", said the nobles, "in the days of our fathers and grand-fathers".

428 AB, p.127 ; DAB, p.79.

429 AB, p.127 ; DAB, p.79.

430 AB, p.127 ; DAB, p.80.

431 AB - 'SMJC', p.79.

They then united and deposed the king in A.D. 1644 for which he was also called Bhaga Raja (deposed king). He was first banished to the hills and interned and later he was put to death at Tipam under orders of Hso-Ching-Hpa by giving him food mixed up with poison.⁴³²

When Hso-Ram-Hpa ascended the throne the Kachari Raja addressed a diplomatic epistle to him which bore for the first time the lion-seal instead of the usual flower-seal. With the king's command Laku Barpatra tore off the epistle and pushed out of the Court the envoys of the Raja who brought it. From this incident Kachari-Ahom freindship again broke off.⁴³³

Hso-Ram-Hpa built a road in Salaguri which is sometimes called Takubari Ali.⁴³⁴

19. Hso-Ching-Hpa (1644-1648) :

Hso-Ching-Hpa (or Hso-Ching-Mong) was next placed on the throne by the nobles. But this prince was sickly for which he was also known as Nariya Raja. He married the daughter of Laku Barpatra whom he made the chief queen. One of his wives, who was the sister of Hui-Phak alias Sariah Bura-Gohain, warned the king against the activities of his eldest son, Lapet (Laplup), who, in collusion with Laku Barpatra, had effected the murder of the former king and was now conspiring to overthrow him. The king tested the

432 See Tr. 84 (DHAS) ; DAB, p.81.

433 Ibid ; also AB - 'SMJC', pp.78-79.

434 DAB, p.79.

allegation and found proof. He therefore invited Prince Lapet (Laplup) to a dinner and treacherously put him to death at Bhogbari. Next he executed Laku Barpatra and his brothers and sons in A.D. 1645 and deposed his daughter from the position of the chief queen. Sariah Bura-Gohain's sister was then made the chief queen.⁴³⁵

Sungi Expedition Of 1646 :

An important event during Hso-Ching-Hpa's reign was an expedition sent against the Sungis⁴³⁶ of the north border hills. It was led by three generals, namely, Dilihiyal Sukulahudu Bura-Gohain, Kenduguria Barpatra and the Ghora-Kunwar Piksai. The expeditionary force was divided into two regiments, the first headed by the Bura-Gohain and the Barpatra started from Rangachapari and then marched up the river Dikrang and encamped at Maghnowa (or Baghnowa), and the second, headed by the Ghora-kunwar, followed up the course of the Burai⁴³⁷ river and came out after setting fire to the villages of the Sungis and destroying their crops. As the Ahoms were preparing to construct palisades the Sungis attacked them killing a number of troops. The Ahom force^{at} Maghnowa then advanced to Bandardewa. The Bura-Gohain sent one Ruprai with seven hundred men to attack

⁴³⁵ DAB, p.82 ; AB, p.129,142.

⁴³⁶ Gait assumes the Sungis to be Daflas as the latter call themselves 'Sing' or 'Nyising' and also because the locality described is that now inhabited by this tribe. See his History of Assam, p.124. f.n.

⁴³⁷ The Dikrang is a river in the North Lakhimpur Sub-Division of Upper Assam, and the Burai, a river to the east of Tezpur in the district of Darrang.

the Sungi villages, but the Sungis, who were excellent archers, killed him and repulsed his men. At a place called Hanbohara some five hundred men of the Bura-Gohain's force were killed. Being much harassed by the elusive Sungis the Bura-Gohain and the Barpatra retreated after destroying a fort of the Sungis, but the king dismissed both for their failure to subdue this small tribe and appointed Sariah of Tepartal as Bura-Gohain and Banchangia Tema as Barpatra.⁴³⁸ He next sent Mechagharia Par-Gohain and Hatimuria Phukan with a second expeditionary force against the Sungis. They proceeded to Athiabari, but did not meet the Sungis for a regular fight. They adopted guerilla tactics of harassing a strong army. Hence no Sungi could be captured. The Bar-Gohain then destroyed their villages with all the granaries and standing crops and took away their cattle leaving the Sungis without food and means of cultivation. The Sungis being helpless and at the same time terribly suffering from starvation submitted to the Ahom king and obtained relief.⁴³⁹

Relations With The Kacharis :

The Kachari Raja Biradarpanarayan made a fresh move for friendship by sending an embassy to the Ahom Court.

⁴³⁸ K.T.P. : op.cit., p.36. Later Hatipoali was made Bura-Gohain and again he was replaced by Sukulahudu and Saru Bura was made Bar-Gohain and Rajmantri, but for a short interval Chaparakhowa was made Bar-Gohain. The office of the Bar-Barua was offered to Tangasu Handikoi and that of the Bar-Phukan to Piksai. See K.T.P. : op.cit., p.36 ; H.S.B. ; op.cit., p.45.

⁴³⁹ AB, pp.132-33 ; DAB, pp.82-83 ; AB, - 'SMJC', pp.80-81 ; Tr. 84 (DHAS).

The Ahom king, Hso-Ching-Hpa, reminded in his reply to the Kachari Raja that the latter's dynasty had been established and protected (Thapit-Sanchit) by the Ahom kings and as such the old friendship had been in force. The Kachari Raja could not brook the use of the term Thapit-Sanchit in the Ahom king's reply and wrote back to him that the term Thapit-Sanchit was properly applied to Hedembeswar (Kachari Raja of Hedemba) as he was established by the Ahom king by offering a bride to him,⁴⁴⁰ but the present use of the term would be inappropriate unless it was the intention of the Ahom king to offer a bride again. This interpretation of the implication of Thapit-Sanchit was highly resented by Hso-Ching-Hpa. Added to that the bitter memory of the indifference with which the Kachari Raja Bhimbal received a bride of an Ahom noble family was still fresh. Yet, as precedent had already been set, the king and the nobles decided to offer the ^{of a bride} hope/and sent a letter accordingly to Biradarpanarayan so that friendly relations might be maintained and trades with the Kacharis carried on.

There were further disturbances in the Sungi country and the Khamjang Nagas sought protection of the Ahom king against the Khamteng and other Nagas. The Sungis were again punished and brought to order and the troublesome Nagas were

⁴⁴⁰ Reference here appears to be to Derzhungpha (Detslung) to whom the Ahom king, Hso-Hom-Mong, offered a daughter of one Sonari. (See AB - 'SMJC', p.22).

subdued. Khanjang Naras raided Namrup, but they fled away when the Raja of Tipam marched against them. The Raja stopped paying the usual tributes and organized a revolt of the Tipamiyas. The revolt was put down and the Tipam Raja captured and executed. This king constructed what is called the Mishimi garh.

CHAPTER VII

THE TAI KINGDOM IN ASSAM : THE AHOM DYNASTY - II.

(Hindu Period)

The sister of Sariah Kura-Gohain, who is now the chief queen of Hso-Ching-Npa after the first chief queen had been degraded and her son put to death, made it a plan to place her son, Chao-Shai,¹ on the throne after her husband. But even as a Prince he made himself extremely unpopular by his wild and devilish frolics. The ministers and nobles of the Court then invited Prince Chao-Sham to succeed his father.

20. Chao-Hpa Hso-Tam-La
alias Jayadhwaj Singha (1648-1663) :

In Lakni kakeu (A.D. 1648) Prince Chao-Sham² ascended the throne under the title of Chao-Hpa Hso-Tam-La. On the 7th day of the month of Dinruk (Baisakh), as described in AB (p.144), the king ascended the Singari-Ghar and placed the Chum-pha on the throne opening the casket containing it. He made innumerable presents to the people of the country including the ordinary labourers, attendants, the Ahoms and

1 Kukurekhowa Gohain in some Assamese Buranjis.

2 called Khahna Gohain in some Assamese Buranjis.
See DAB, p.87 ; AB - 'SMJC', p.83.

the Brahmins. The amusements continued for seven days and nights and cannon were fired, harps played and flutes blown. He ~~sax~~ planted an Aubar or Ayubar (a life giving banian tree) on the Charaideo Hill. He also assumed the Hindu title of Jayadhvaj Singha. It must be remembered that he was the first Tai-Ahom king to be converted to Hinduism, but whether he assumed the Hindu title after or before his initiation into that religion is not definitely known. According to an account of Auniati Satra of Assam (DHAS. Tr. 94, vol. V, Part V, p.309) he became a desciple of Niranjan Dev, the first Satradhikar of that Satra, in the Sak 1576 (A.D. 1654), that is, in the sixth year of his reign. But he came undoubtedly under the Brahminic influence at a much earlier date.

Soon after his accession he took measures to get rid of his chief opponents. His bed-ridden father, Hso-Ching-Hpa, who had been deposed, was interned at Ranjakham (or Ranshekham). As conspirators against his accession Sariah Bura-Gohain, his two sons and Nakkata (or Cheleng) Bêz were executed at Barhat under orders of Hso-Tam-La. Chao-Shai and his mother were also executed at the same place and buried together in the same grave.³ The ex-king was poisoned to death in the same year (1648). Following the advice of the deceased king to change the pillars of the State, Hso-Tam-La appointed Kunwoiganya Lasham as his Bura-Gohain in

3 AB - 'SMJC', p.83 ; DAB, p.87.

place of Sukulaphudu, who was put to death. Later Lasham was succeeded by Banhgarhia Atan as Bara-Gohain. Hso-Tam-La had Leshai of Pilinga's family and Barukial Langisong as Bar-Gohains one after another and Lai, Cherelia and Bhaga as Barpatra Gohains successively. The king's father-in-law Naoboicha Phukan was appointed Rajmantri.⁴ Tangasu of Kandikoi family served as the Bar-Barua for a part of his reign, but finding him incompetent to conduct the affairs of diplomatic relations the king removed him and appointed Sengdhara⁵ as Bar-Barua. Garhganya Raja-Sasur⁶ was made Bar-Phukan.

One Buranji says that Jayadvaj Singha was the first Ahom king to introduce octagonal silver mohars or coins bearing legends in Hindu script. His coins have actually Sanskrit legends in old Assamese script.⁷

4 K.T.P. : op.cit., p.38.

5 sometimes referred to as Bengkhowa. For Sengdhara see AB - 'SMJC', p.85.

6 K.T.P. : op.cit., p.38. In AB (pp.173,175) Phukan-mong or Bar-Phukan is shown by the translator to be Baduli Phukan. In Kashinath's Buranji (p.117) and Harakanta's Buranji (p.135) Baduli is shown to be the only Bar-Phukan during Jayadvaj Singha's reign. In Kashinath's Buranji (p.39) it is stated 'Cheuni Ali was constructed by Baduli Bar-Phukan'. Shaista Khan addressed his letter (Kamrupar Buranji, p.58) to 'brother Bar-Nawab (Bar-Phukan), Sasur of Svarga-Raja'. In the Buranjis there are references to Garhganya Raja-Sasur, Raja-Sasur Neog Gohain Bar-Phukan, Nemanial Raja-Sasur etc. It appears from the accounts that Baduli Phukan, who was appointed Neog Phukan or the Commander of the army at Manahamukh (AB, p.162), was different from Raja-Sasur Bar-Phukan who is identified with Chengmun Raja-Sasur Bar-Phukan by S.K.Bhuyan (Atan Bara Gohain and His Times, p.22). It may be that Chengmun was himself Baduli, an Assamese term. Nemanial Raja-Sasur was, of course, not Bar-Phukan. The point requires further investigation.

7 AB - 'SMJC', p.84.

Mughul-Ahom Relations (1639-1658) :

It may be remembered that after the conclusion of the Mughul-Ahom boundary Treaty of 1639 Allah Yar Khan was appointed as the Faujdar of Kamrup. The branch of the river Brahmaputra that was flowing by Hajo reduced its strategic importance by being silted up year after year and becoming dry in the winter and dry summer seasons. Hence with the acquisition of Gauhati the Mughul head-quarters were transferred to that place by Allah Yar Khan. Though there were no wars with the Mughuls during Allah Yar's faujdarship from A.D. 1639 to 1645,³ yet the Ahoms' relations with the Mughuls were not without frictions. To cite instances, the Bar-Barua wrote to Allah Yar Khan for repatriating an Assamese official who happened to cross the Bar Nadi and reach the Sarania Hill whence he had been sent to Dacca. Instead of complying with the request the Mughul Faujdar made a counter-charge that the Ahom authorities had put into confinement sixty-three Mughul subjects who had strayed into their territory on the north bank. Again in November, 1645, a batch of one hundred and seven Mughul soldiers made an unauthorized entrance into the Ahom territory

³ The Purani Asam Buranji indicates that there were exchanges of letters between Allah Yar Khan and the Bar-Barua for seven years from Sak 1551 to 1557, but on a comparison of these dates with those of other Chronicles and of Padishanama they are found to be earlier by full one decade and hence subject to correction.

by crossing the Bar Nadi and proceeded as far as Singari in Darrang in order to catch elephants. They also killed an Assamese officer of the frontier post with the consequence that these Mughuls were arrested and put into a prison by the Barua. The Faujdar tried to get these men released, but the Bar-Barua apparently refused to set them free as the nature of the offence was grave and the Faujdar found no strong ground to insist on returning them. Early in 1641 Allah Yar Khan demanded the extradition of the traitor Chandranarayan, son of Parikshit, who had been given political asylum by the Ahom king and wrote a letter to the Bar-Barua regretting the refusal of the king to deliver him up to the imperial authorities. The Bar-Barua retorted by saying in his reply that the imperialists had no reason to make such a demand after refusing to deliver the four sons of Balinarayan who had gone over to them as deserters from the side of the Assam king. In April, 1646, the Bar-Barua in a letter accused the Mughuls of their action in harbouring Kama Govinda, an underling of the Ahom king, who had fled to Bengal betraying his suzerain. Numerous similar cases of violations of rights and privileges on both sides were alleged in a series of diplomatic letters exchanged between the Ahom and imperial authorities. These letters are but evidences of a state of tension that continued to exist between the Ahoms and the Mughuls throughout this period of apparent peace.

Allah Yar Khan retired in A.D. 1645 and there followed a decade of comparative obscurity except that we know the names of as many as five Mughal Faujdars⁹ who ruled Kamrup with head-quarters at Gauhati. Allah Yar was succeeded by :-

1. Huzar Thandari (less than a year, 1646),
2. Mirza Hussain (1647),
3. Sayyid Hussain (died at Gauhati at the end of 1648),
4. Sayyid Kutub (1649-51),
5. Sayyid Saleh (1651-53).

Then came the eventful period of Mir Lutfullah Shirazi, who was appointed Faujdar of Kamrup in A.D. 1654. In the Assamese Buranjis he is referred to as Mirza Nathula or simply as Nathuma.¹⁰

We know that Shah Jahan's reign, which was supposed to be the golden period of Mughal rule in India, came to a tragic end with the commencement of the war of succession among his sons¹¹ during 1657-58. Taking advantage of this intestine war Raja Prannarayan of Koch Behar, so long loyal to the Mughals, prepared himself to overthrow the Mughal suzerainty and deliver the Koch country. He sent envoys to Durlabhnarayan of the same Koch family with himself and who

⁹ S.E. Bhattacharyya : op.cit., pp.294-95.

¹⁰ Kamrupar Buranji, p.52 ; AB - 'SHTC', p.89 ; Gunabhiram Doria in his Buranji gives a slightly different list of Faujdars and refers to Mir Lutfullah as Nathuma.

¹¹ Shah Jahan had four sons, namely, Dara Shukoh aged 43, Shuja aged 41, Aurangzeb aged 39, and Murad aged 33 at the time of the struggle for the throne. See An Advanced History of India by Majumdar, Raychaudhuri and Datta, p.491.

was the son of Uttamnarayan and a chieftain (Raja) under the Mughuls at Barnagar at that time, with a request to join hands with him to liberate the Koch kingdoms from Muslim domination. But Durlabhnarayan sent words in reply reminding Prannarayan how he was put in charge of Koch Behar by the Mughul authorities with Sanad under proper arrangements and as for himself he expressed his inability to collaborate with Prannarayan to fight the Mughuls. On the contrary, he professed his loyalty and gratefulness to the Padshah who by a Sanad made him a Raja in Kamrup.¹² Enraged at such a reply Prannarayan despatched Bhabanath Qazi with an army to bring him as captive together with another chief named Harinarayan, and destroy their homes and head-quarters.¹³ Bhabanath occupied Khuntaghat and proceeded to Madati. Durlabhnarayan and Harinarayan fled via Darrang to Beltala. Dharma Raja's son, Mohidharnarayan, probably the then chief of Beltala, after consultation with the Phukans of the Lower Assam head-quarters of the Ahoms, sent report of this matter to the Ahom king and the latter ordered Tangasu Handikoi, who was then constructing bridges over the Kallang river, to escort the fugitive chiefs to Garhgaon. Tangasu then sailed down with a flotilla of armed boats to bring Durlabhnarayan under protection. At the same time Bhabanath Qazi advanced towards Hajo. The Mughul Faujdar

12 AB, p.158 ; Assam Buzanji (1648-1681 A.D.), pp.13-14.

13 Ibid, p.14.

of Gauhati sent his son Jarulla to oppose Bhabanath. Jarulla encamped at Mohkhuti and fought Bhabanath at Madati but was defeated and forced to retreat to Gauhati and Bhabanath arrived at Hajo. Mir Lutfullah Shirazi himself then made an attempt to check the advance of Bhabanath but it was unsuccessful. Being frightened by the advance of two armies - one of Bhabanath Qazi from the west and the other of the Ahoms led by Tangasu Handikoi from the east - Mir Lutfullah Shirazi fled by boat to Dacca 'with the speed of lightning and wind' under cover of darkness of a night in February, A.D. 1689 after governing Kamrup for about five years. The very next morning, by a rapid advance, General Tangasu Handikoi reached Gauhati and occupied in quick succession the town of Gauhati and the forts of Pandu and Saraighat and seized 140 horses, 40 pieces of cannon, 200 matchlocks and a large quantity of property in the imperial stores. Raja-Sasur Bar-Phukan and Piksai Chetia remained in charge of Pandu and Saraighat and Tangasu Handikoi and Lapet Phukan advanced to Sessa between Saraighat and Hajo and constructed fortifications at that place.¹⁴ Bhabanath Qazi, whose further advance was checked by the Ahoms, tried to consolidate his position at Hajo.

At this time Prannarayan sent envoys to Jayadvaj Singha with a proposal which runs thus - 'Let Maharaja take

¹⁴ Kamrupar Buranji, p.52 ; AB - 'SMJC', pp.89-90.

Dakshinkul, I take Uttarkul, what can the Bangals do if your men and our men offer a joint front at Hatichala ?'¹⁵ Jayadvaj Singha rejected the proposal with the remark - 'He did not send such a proposal before, the Dhakeri wants now to put salt into the boiled curry' - and asked his officers to dismiss the envoys. Bhabanath Qazi then marched from Hajo to take Gauhati and reached Agiathuti. Here he had to encounter the Ahoms who engaged him in a battle which was fought with casualties to both sides, but Bhabanath suffered a severe defeat and his son, Aniruddha Qazi, was killed. Bhabanath fled to Champaguri and thence to Koch Behar leaving Chandranarayan in charge of the Champaguri fort. Momai Tamuli Bar-Barua's brother Baduli Phukan and Phul Barua captured Madati. The Ahoms pursued the remnants of the Koch Behar army, called Bardewania or Bardewalia by the Assamese, to the Barlia (the river Baralia) and then to Vishnupur. The Koches being unable to maintain their stand at Vishnupur crossed the Sonkosh and entered their territory. One advance guard under Baduli Phukan and Lapet Phukan attacked Champaguri, killed Chandranarayan in the battle and captured the fortifications. Then Lapet Phukan and Phul Barua proceeded down by boats and seized the fortified town of Vijaypur. Baduli and Lapet with Phul Barua devastated and annexed Hatichala and Baritala. The Bar-Phukan and Piksai Chetia ordered

¹⁵ AB - 'SMJC', p.90 ; Kamrupar Baranji, p.53. 'Maharaja' refers to the Ahom king and 'Bangals' to the Mughuls. Hatichala is down Pancharatan on the south bank of the Brahmaputra.

a mass evacuation of the Dhakeris of Kamrup as far as the Saru-Sonkosh with the result that the whole of that region became covered with jungles and remained in that condition for one year and a half.¹⁶ Raja Premnarayan, an ally of the Ahoms, attacked Dhubri with the help of a Barahi Hazarika, defeated the Bardwanias and captured the town acquiring a large booty of war materials. A regiment under Temali Daloi's son crossed the Sonkosh, fired shots and returned to Vijaypur in the autumn of 1659. The Ahoms made their encampments on the eastern bank of the Sonkosh which then formed the boundary between Koch Behar and the Ahom territory. Thus the entire old kingdom of Raja Parikshit came under the Ahoms.¹⁷

In the meantime, Chandranarayan's son Jaynarayan deserted from the Mughuls and came and submitted to the Svargadev, who gave him shelter and settled him as the Raja of Vijaypur. He was also offered a bride, attendants and other requirements befitting his position. Durlabhnarayan, who had submitted to the Svargadev, was also given protection. Gandharvanarayan, a son of Birnarayan,¹⁸ was made Raja of Beltala by Jayadhwaj Singha.¹⁹ Mohidharnarayan, son of Dharmanarayan (Balinnarayan), was also appointed Raja of

¹⁶ Kamrupar Buranji, p.54.

¹⁷ Assam Buranji (1648-1681 A.D.), pp.16-17 ;
Kamrupar Buranji, p.53 ; AB - 'SMJC', p.90.

¹⁸ Birnarayan was the son of Lakshminarayan, Maharaja of Koch Behar, and Prannarayan was the son of Birnarayan and ruled from A.D. 1625 to 1665.

¹⁹ Assam Buranji (1648-1681 A.D.), p.17.

Vishnupur, but he did not continue long there. Numerous Ahom soldiers, who were engaged in western campaigns, suffered from fever, dysentery and diarrhoea. They were therefore brought to Kajali, whilst the others continued to guard the frontier.²⁰ Having report of the withdrawal of the Ahom troops Bhabanath Gazi returned with a force and encamped on the west bank of the river Manaha. When this news reached Garhgaon the king ordered the Bar-Phukan Raja-Sasur and Piksa Chetia to advance to the mouth of the Manaha, another body headed by Dihingia Lapet Phukan was stationed at Dhubri and a third body with Baduli and Durlabhnarayan was placed at Vishnupur.²¹

At this stage Jaynarayan volunteered to bring about a rapprochement between Koch Behar and Assam, but he failed. The Koches (Bardewania) and the Ahoms exchanged fire across the Manaha for three days, after which in the month of Chaitra Bhabanath retired to Koch Behar. When Jaynarayan was asked by the Ahom king to explain for his failure, he took fright and fled away from Pancharatan to Bengal in Baisakh, A.D. 1660.²² Tangasu Handikoi was charged by the Svargadev on two counts, first, that he had allowed the Mughul Faujdar to escape though he could have captured him with a little more effort, and secondly, that the properties seized by him at Gauhati, Pandu and Saraighat were not sent to the king. For these offences Tangasu and his associates were put under chains at Rajahat.

²⁰ Ibid, p.17.

²¹ Ibid, p.18.

²² Kamrupar Buranji, pp.55-54 ; AB - 'SMJC', p.91.

**Mir Jumla's Invasion of Koch Behar
and Assam (1661-1663) :**

After the second coronation of Aurangzeb in June, 1659, Mir Jumla,²³ who came to eastern India in pursuit of Shuja, was appointed Governor of Bengal in May, 1660 with orders to 'punish the lawless Zamindars of the province, especially those of Assam and Mugh (Arrocan) who had caused injury and molestation to the Muslims'.²⁴ It is pointed out by the Venetian writer Niccolao Manucci (Storia De Mogor, Indian Texts Series, vol.II, p.98) that 'it was the common belief that Aurangzeb ordered Mir Jumla into Assam that he might be got rid of, dreading that, as he had thrown the kingdom of Gulkandah into confusion, and had known how to arrange for the conquest of Dara and the destruction of Shiva Ji, he might likewise attempt by his devices to place someone else on the Mogul throne'. Shasta Khan told Mir Jumla, when the latter saw him at Dacca being ordered by the Emperor just before his expedition to Assam, that he

²³ Mir Jumla's real name was Muhammad Sa'id, a Persian merchant-adventurer and son of Mirza Hans who made an immense fortune by trading in diamonds and precious stones. He was noted for his great administrative ability and military genius. He soon rose to the position of prime minister under the Sultan of Golkunda, conquered Karnatak, helped Aurangzeb during the war of succession and became a Mughal general. He was appointed Governor of Bengal in 1660. He is referred to in the Durans of Assam by various names such as Mitjanathula (AB, p.158 etc.), Hajumkhan (AB - 'GHJC', p.91 etc.), Mir-jumla (AB, p.175 ; Assam Duranji, Ed. by Dutta, p.18 etc.). He was also given the title of Var-i-wafadar or Faithful friend of the Emperor by Aurangzeb on his accession and created Shan-i-khanan and Sisak - Salar (Commander-in-Chief) on 15th July, 1660. - See Shihabuddin Talish's Fathiya-i-Ibriyah as translated into English by Prof. Jadunath Sarkar and published in the Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society, vol.I, Part II, December, 1915, pp.179-195.

²⁴ as quoted in History of Aurangzeb, III, by T.H.

had no bread in this country unless he earned it by conquest of Assam. At the same time all that Mir Jumla had been doing so long was only to help the emperor to settle the internal problems without making any new annexation to the empire. Hence his desire to conquer Assam was strong and he even pitched his ambition so high as to conquer China after Assam which was also the dream of some of the earlier Muslim conquerors. The Ahom king and his officers were quite aware of Mir Jumla's impending invasion and made preparations accordingly to oppose him. Yet the king, in consultation with his ministers, tried to avert the war or at least to postpone it through negotiation and with that view sent two experienced envoys, Senatan and Madhavcharan, to Shaista Khan, the Nawab of Dacca and maternal uncle of Aurangzeb. But Shaista Khan impressed on the envoys Aurangzeb's imperialist designs on Assam and Mir Jumla's might and devastating power. From the envoys' report the Ahom king had nothing to doubt about the inevitability of a big war with the Mughuls.

Before proceeding to Assam Mir Jumla first wanted to conquer Koch Behar and punish the Raja, but in the meantime he despatched from Dacca two envoys, Laloo and Hariram,²⁵ to the Phukans of Assam at Pancharatan protesting against their usurpation of the imperial domains of Hatichala, Baritala and Gauhati and asking them to withdraw from those areas for the good of Assam. The Phukans referred to were Baduli Phukan,

25 distorted sometimes as Lalooa and Haram.

Lapet-Phukan, Lahan Phukan and Phul Barua Phukan who were then at their advance post at Pancharatan opposite Jogighopa after having devastated and annexed Hatichala and Baritala. The matter was referred to the Svargadev and the envoys had to wait there for eight days for the reply. The Svargadev sent the reply through the Phukans that Kamrup was not usurped by the Ahoms, it was seized from the Bardewalias, who, led by Bhabanath Qazi, had usurped it. With the Bengal envoys an Ahom Kataki named Sanatan was sent by the Phukans to convey this reply to Mir Jumla. But Mir Jumla was not satisfied with it. He insisted on releasing Kamrup and threatened invasion of Garhgaon in the event of non-compliance.²⁶

Mir Jumla then proceeded to conquer Koch Behar in A.D. 1661 and also to recover several Mughul districts adjoining the territories thereof which had been seized by Prannarayan. At the same time he appointed Rashid Khan to lead an expedition against Assam and sent another force under Raja Sujan Singh to conquer Koch Behar. Rashid Khan advanced unopposed to Rangamati at the western end of Kamrup and made his encampment there. Sujan Singh with his detachment reached Ek Doar, a fortified gateway leading to Koch Behar, in May, 1661, but he was defeated by Prannarayan. Then Mir Jumla himself assumed the command to conduct the war in person and marched upon the town of Koch Behar at the head of a large

²⁶ AB - 'SMJC', pp.91-93 ; Kamrupar Buranji, pp.59-60 ; Assam Buranji (1648-1681 A.D.), pp.18-19.

army not by Ek Dooar nor by the known way of Khontaghat but by an obscure and unguarded way. The Raja being taken by surprise fled from the capital and concealed himself in the woods and hills. He was not defeated in a battle. Bhabanath Qazi also did not face the Mughul army, but conspired to help it to capture the Raja so that he might get the favour of being appointed as a tributary chief of Koch Behar under the Mughuls. Vishnunarayan, the eldest son of the Raja, also turned a traitor and co-operated with Mir Jumla with the ambition to seize the throne from the father. The Raja, in the meantime, had taken refuge in the hill-fort of Baska in Bhutan. The Dharma Raja of Bhutan, who was his friend, received him with hospitality and gave him protection. Mir Jumla asked the Bhutan Raja to deliver the fugitive Koch Raja, but the latter refused to do so. Mir Jumla however captured the prime minister and occupied the capital of Koch Behar on the 19th December, 1661, and changed its name into Alangir-nagar. He settled the revenues of the country at ten lakhs of Narayani rupees and set out to conquer Assam leaving at the capital Isfundiar Beg with 1,400 horse, and 2,000 musketeers and Sayyid Mahammad Saduk as the chief judge.²⁷

After sixteen days' stay at Koch Behar Mir Jumla set out with his loyal follower Dilir Khan on 4th January, 1662 to invade Assam. He absorbed Rashid Khan's detachment at Rangamati on the way. According to J.N. Sarker the army

²⁷ H.N. Chowdhury : The Cooch Behar State, pp.236-37, Prannarayan's letter to Jaydhvaj Singha - see Kamrupar Buranji, pp.76-77 ; J.N. Sarker : op.cit., p.157.

of Mir Jumla, when he first started from Dacca on 1st November, 1661, consisted of 12,000 horse, and 30,000 foot. In addition there was a vast flotilla of war-vessels (according to Fathiyah at least 323 boats of all kinds) the most powerful of them being ghurebs or floating batteries, each towed by four long row-boats called Koshas and carrying 14 guns and a crew of 60 men. The most striking feature of his naval force was that the naval officers and sailors were Portuguese or half breeds, with a number of English and Dutch sailors. This fact accounted for the superiority of the Mughul navy over the Ahom navy which had remained unbeaten to this time. All these forces except what was left in Koch Behar are supposed to have proceeded to the invasion of Assam.²⁸

When the Phukens learnt that Mir Jumla was advancing to invade Assam with a large army they withdrew from Hatichala and Baritala to Jogighopa at Manahamkh where they, with Baduli Phukan appointed as the Neog Phukan or Commander-in-Chief of the army there, made a strong fort, which the author of the Fathiyah-i-Ibriyah describes as 'a large and high fort on the Brahmaputra. Near it the enemy had dug many holes for the horses to fall into, and pointed pieces

²⁸ Buranjis and Muslim records give different figures of the forces of Assam war. In some Assamese Buranjis cavalry is mentioned as 60,000 in Storia 40,000 horsemen, the Dutch sailor in Glanius (p.145) an incredible number of 300,000 horse and 500,000 foot, Riyaz-us-salatin mentions 20,000 efficient cavalry and numerous infantry. But what has been stated above appears to be correct and never less than the actual numbers.

of bamboo (panjia) had been stuck in the holes. Behind the the holes, for about half a shot's distance, on even ground, they had made a ditch, and behind this ditch, near the fort, another one three yards deep. The latter was also full of pointed bamboos. This is how the Ahoms fortify all their positions. They make their forts of mud. The Brahmaputra is south of the fort, and on the east is the Monas'. The fort was about two miles in circumference with strong and thick walls which were mounted with guns. Some accounts say about 5,000 soldiers assisted by 320 war-vessels guarded the fort. At Pancharatan, opposite Jagighopa, Phul Barua Phukan and Lahan Phukan made a similar defence fort and took their position against the advancing enemy. Raja-Sasur and Pilsai Chetia defended Pandu and Saraighat. Barzukia²⁹ Bar-Gohain was put in command of the garrison in the fort of Samdhara on the north bank and the south bank was guarded by the Bara-Gohain, Barpatra-Gohain, Nomanial Raja-Sasur Barchetia,³⁰ Shairing Raja, Rup Handikoi and other warriors of repute with Ghora Konwar Phukan as the supreme commander over all.

At this stage, according to one account,³¹ Manthir Bharali Barua, son of Bez Daloi, appeared at Gauhati with power to enquire into the offences of those persons, who were associated with Tangasu Handikoi in misappropriating the

²⁹ called also Barukial in Assamese.

³⁰ obviously different from Garhganya Raja-Sasur Bar-Phukan.

³¹ AB - 'SMJC', p.93. This is the only account available in which Manthir Bharali Barua's appointment as magistrate and supreme commander for Lower Assam with consequent defection among the Ahom generals is described.

properties seized when the Mughal Faujdar, Mir Iutfullah Shireazi, fled to Dacca. He was, at his own instance, appointed by the king not only to adjudicate upon this matter, but was also made Parbatia Phukan and Commander-in-Chief (Sardar) of the Lower Assam army above the Bar-Phukan. Not much is known about the Bez-Daloi family and Manthir Bharali Barua³² previous to this except that they were in the past instrumental in getting four Thakuria Medhis (Gosains) of the Kai-Samhati executed at Rajahat by the order of the Svargadev. But now equipped with the powers as above Manthir came down to Gauhati, sat as a magistrate with supreme authority at the Bar-Phukan's court and inflicted cruel punishments, such as death and mutilation, on many people.

When this news reached the Ahom officers at Manahamukh and Pancharatan all were upset at such unprecedented supersession of powers. The Bar-Phukan asserted 'It is properly within my jurisdiction to decide the question of the booties seized. Bez-Daloi's son alone becomes trustworthy, we the Phukans and other officers have become untrustworthy. Very well, let other responsibilities also be taken by the Bez-Daloi'. The Phukans remarked: 'As Bez-Daloi Bhanderi Barua has come as Sardar (Commander) above us, let him now do the fighting'.³³ Thus expressing their grievance all the officers and soldiers gave up war and withdrew to Pandu and Saraighat without shooting a single

³² S.K. Bhuyan says that he was a Hindu and Kayastha. See AB - 'SMJC', Analysis, p.xxii.

³³ Tr.84 (DHAS), vol.II, Part I, p.72.

bunch of arrows.³⁴ Mir Juma sent one detachment under the command of Nasiru-'d Din Khan to march up along the south bank of the Brahmaputra, while he himself with the main force advanced along the north bank and crossed the Manaha unopposed 'by a bridge of boats'. The Mughul fleet sailed up the Brahmaputra keeping pace with the land armies.

But the version of the Tai-Ahom text is different. It makes no mention of any defection among the Ahom officers on the eve of the invasion. It simply says that when the Mughul invading army in its advance was not far beyond Manaha-mukh cholera broke out in the camp of the Assam army and twelve thousand men died of the disease in the area.³⁵ The rest of the army had to be removed to an unaffected area to the east of the Manaha. Here, too, they could not get rid of the pestilence. Just when this sudden calamity seriously weakened the Ahom vanguard a part of the Mughul fleet was sighted and the generals immediately reported the matter to the king. On receipt of this information the king sent Tamuli Daloi's grandson to inform the army officers to take their stand there and not to retreat any farther. But before the arrival of the king's messenger 30,000 Muslims with forty horses laid siege to the Manaha fort. The remnants of the Ahom force in the fort gave battle, but when the enemy batteries manned by European personnel went into action inflicting heavy casualties and demolishing the fort they had to retreat

34 AB - 'SHJC', p.93.

35 AB, p.162.

to Saraighat and take shelter under Kaliabaria Phukan.³⁶
The fort of Pancharaten was also seized without having to meet any opposition.³⁷

Mir Juma continued his victorious march leaving Ataula in command of the fort of Jogighopa. Meanwhile the news of the fall of Jogighopa had reached king Jayadvaj Singha who then sent a large reinforcement under the command of his ministers, frontier governors and several other high officers to make a combined attack on the enemies at Saraighat. But Mir Juma marched with such speed that he took without opposition Hajo and Saraighat, the latter being a bigger and stronger fort than that of Manahamukh protected by a palisade of large logs of wood, before the arrival of the Ahom reinforcement. One advance wing of the Mughul army under Rashid Khan reached Shahburuz behind the back of the Ahom forces at Saraighat and Pandu. Apprehending an encircling movement by the enemy the Ahom forces of those posts rapidly sailed up to Kajali without fighting leaving behind the bulk of their materials which could not be carried. The news of the loss of Saraighat and Pandu made the veteran officers leading the reinforcement fall back and concentrate their strength at the two impregnable forts of Sandhara at the mouth of the Bharali on the north and Simalugari opposite to it on the south bank of the Brahmaputra. The Lower Assam forces of the king became for a time scattered and those who

³⁶ Ibid. p.162.

³⁷ PAB, p.121; Alamgirnama, pp.696-97.

were at Kajali, retreated to Kathalbari, but they all assembled at Samdharn in the middle of March, 1662.³⁸

King Jayachandra was extremely pained to see the mass retreat of the forces under Raja-Sagar Bar-Phukan and other commanders. In face of this great danger he made a new disposition of the generals and the forces as a last measure for the defence of the country. He removed his father-in-law from the office of Bar-Phukan but ^{he} was asked to help in the south bank. He appointed Barukia Bar-Gohain as Commander-in-Chief of the Uttarkul army and he was to be assisted by Kenduguria Barpatra-Gohain, Baduli Phukan, Tipam Raja and Dihingia Rajkhowa. For the Dakshinkul army Chora Nonwar Nyaisodha Phukan was given the supreme command and the officers appointed to assist him were Barhgarhia (or Barhbaria) Bar-Gohain, Namanial Raja-Sagar Barachetia, Rup Handikoi, Sadiyakhwa Gohain, Shairing Raja, Lohan Salaguria Rajkhowa, son of Khampet Bar-Gohain, Mondangia Rajkhowa and a few others. Lapet Dihingia Phukan and Luthuri Dayangia Phukan were to guard a fort on the side of the river Brahmaputra. In the north the grandson of Tamuli Daloi, Lapet Phukan and a few others were placed in charge of the fort at Gutighurua to resist the advance of the Mughals. Hari Deka, the son of Baragcha Gohain and Chao-chit, these three persons were ordered to repair the fort at Sala.³⁹

38 AB, p.163 ; AB - 'SMJC', pp.93-94 ; Kamrupar Buranji, p.62 ; S.N. Bhattacharyya : op.cit., pp.324-25.

39 AB, pp.163-64 ; Kamrupar Buranji, p.62 ; AB - 'SMJC', p.94.

In the meantime the Muslims made a sudden night attack on Beltala, massacred the Assamese force there and occupied the area. According to a Muslim account the Rajas of Darrang and Dimarua now deserted to the Mughuls at Gauhati. The Raja of Darrang is mentioned as one Makardhvaj but, as Gait points out, it was the name of the Raja of Rani while the name of the Raja of Darrang of this period was Suryyanarayan. Mir Jumla passed three days at Saraighat and on the 4th February, 1662, occupied Gauhati which, says Gait, was at this time wholly or chiefly on the north bank of the river.⁴⁰ He then advanced triumphantly along the north bank with the main army, but half way to Sandhara he crossed over to the south bank. It took two days for him to effect the passage of the whole army in boats. On a stormy night some of his boats were upset and many horses jumped into the Brahmaputra. On the south bank, Raja-Sasur, who had been dismissed from his post, became revengeful and in co-operation with one Bhotai Deka of Nowgong showed to the enemy the path through Diyu leading to the plains of Central Assam. Four chiefs of Bengal named Bhatanath, Bhabananda, Bhabadev and Bholanath with twelve sepoyes advanced through the mouth of the Diyu river south of the Kallang and scaled the ramparts. The Assamese garrison of that frontier post retreated to Sala.

With the crossing of Mir Jumla's army the whole brunt of the enemy pressure fell on the south-bank defences

40 Gait : op.cit., p.130.

and there was no fighting on the north bank. Explaining this situation Ghora Konwar Phukan, who was in southern command, requested the Bar-Gohain, the Commander-in-Chief of the Uttarkul, to send some of his troops to reinforce the southern army. But the Bar-Gohain, still apprehending danger, refused to weaken his strength by sending over any troops on the ground that there were vast numbers of men in arms on the south bank ~~then~~ compared with those on the north.⁴¹ At this time a Muslim naval force reached Potakallang near the Diyu river and attacked its fort. Lesham Hatibarua, the commandant of the garrison, put up a gallant resistance and halted the Muslims here. It appears from the account that when with Raja-Sasur's aid Muslim land forces entered the area of Potakallang from Diyu and reinforced the besieging army the defenders of the fort, who fought with great bravery for six days, fled to Sala under overwhelming pressure. Meanwhile Lesham Hatibarua fell fighting. The fort thus passed into the hands of the enemy.⁴² Dilir Khan, advancing along the south bank, reached Simalugari and encamped with his army within the range of cannon shots from the famous strategic fort of that place. The fort was situated between the Brahmaputra on the north and a range hills on the south. It was protected on the east and west by the walls with battlements on which numerous cannon were mounted. Outside the walls were moats studded with

41 Kamrupar Buranji, p. 62.

42 AB, p. 164.

spikes (panjis). The Muslims raised mounds within gun-shot and laid siege to the fort. But the walls of the fort were so tough and thick that cannon balls discharged by the enemy could not penetrate through them. Hence on the 25th February Dilir Khan stormed it, scaled the walls and broke open the gate. The garrison after offering only a feeble resistance fled precipitately leaving behind all of the heavy artillery and other materials. The fall of this giant fort was a fatal blow to the defence of the country. A determined resistance by the brave Ahom generals from this impregnable fort would have changed the course of the war. It remains a puzzle to this day why such a resistance was not put up.⁴³

Its repercussion was serious on the north bank. Apparently being unnerved at the fall of the great bulwark of defence on the south bank the Baxrukia Bar-Gohain destroyed his munition stores at night and evacuated from Sandhara⁴⁴ and the deserted fort was occupied by the triumphant Mughals. Mir Jumla placed his own garrison at Sandhara under Kishen Singh and marched on to Kaliabar, a little to the south-east of Simalugarkh. He stayed at Kaliabar for three days settling its affairs and appointed Sayyid Nasirü-'d-Din as the Faujdar

⁴³ Was it the result of defection in the Ahom camp arising from Manthir Bharali Barua's appointment as described or the evil influence of Raja-Sagur Bar-Phukan who turned hostile after his dismissal and helped the Mughals to advance? These facts, if true, might have some indirect influence, but they certainly could not have undermined the patriotism of the nation and paved the way for the enemy's easy march forward. The main reason of Mughal victories seems to be superior skill and generalship of Mir Jumla coupled with his European complement of the army using superior weapons, like mortars, and superior war tactics.

⁴⁴ Assam Buranji (1648-1681 A.D.), p.20. The Sandhara fort is on the Bhomoraguri Hill to the east of Tezpur.

of this province. From here Mir Jumla's army on its onward march had to take a turn to the right away from the bank and his fleet as there were hills skirting the river, Brahmaputra. The Mughul fleet now became isolated and hence vulnerable to attack. It was commanded by admiral Ibn Hussain assisted by Munawwar Khan. The Ahoms now planned the destruction of the fleet so as to be able to eat up the land army of the Mughuls by cutting off its supplies. Thus in the night of 3rd March, 1662, a very powerful Assamese navy of over seven hundred ships⁴⁵ attacked the Mughul fleet above Kaliabar and it looked as if it would swallow up all the Portuguese and their boats. But the Portuguese warded it off making 'a great din with their mortars and matchlocks', and meanwhile the Assamese boats were carried down past their goal by the force of the strong currents of the river. Though the Assamese veered round to attack the Portuguese fell upon them with such impetuosity that after a few hours of fierce fighting the Assamese were vanquished and a number of their 'ships' sunk and three hundred captured.⁴⁶ The collapse of the Assamese navy was hastened when a force, despatched by Mir Jumla under the command of Muhammad Hussain Beg, came to the assistance of the Mughul fleet in action. This naval discomfiture of the Ahoms was to be mainly attributed to the superior technique and arms of the

⁴⁵ Glanville (p.154) mentions six hundred ships.

⁴⁶ Storia, vol.II, pp.98-99 ; though the author does not mention the place of the naval battle the period of 28 days from Hajo as mentioned in the account leaves no doubt about the place being above Kaliabar. S.N.Bhattacharyya: op.cit. pp.328-29.

European mercenaries in the Mughul army. This was the first great disaster the Ahom navy had ever suffered in its history and it decided the fate of Assam in her struggle against Mir Jumla.

The Muslims had to fight at a number of places in order to clear their way to Garhgaon, the capital of Assam. At Jannung the Mughuls attacked the fort which was under the Barchatia. The attack was repulsed. The Mughuls then attacked the fort under the Bar-Gohain but could not take it. Another engagement took place at Gutighurua near Sandhara in which Lapet Phukan and Tamuli Daloi's son fought the Mughuls for several hours but, being defeated, retreated to the fort of Sandhara.⁴⁷ There was also an Assamese naval attack on the Mughuls at Kukurakata, but it was repulsed and the men of the navy fled to Garhgaon.⁴⁸

Mir Jumla advanced to Salagarh, a few miles above Kaliabar. At his approach all the Ahom officers - the Gohains, Phukans and Buruas - evacuated Sala with their wives and children and reached Garhgaon.⁴⁹ At Sala several Ahom nobles met Mir Jumla with letters from Jayadhwaj Singha

47 AB - 'SMJC', p.94 ; Kamrupar Buranji, p.62.
J.N.Sarkar : op.cit., pp.160-61.

48 Assam Buranji (1643-1681 A.D.), p.20.

49 Their date of reaching Garhgaon is given in AB - 'SMJC', (p.94) as Tuesday, 7th Chaitra, Sak 1583 (A.D.1662) and that of the king's flight as 9th Chaitra. J.N.Sarkar, by reference to Fathiyah, says that Mir Jumla entered Garhgaon on the 17th March, 1662. See his History of Aurangzib, III, p.161. If Fathiyah is correct 7th and 9th Chaitras (roughly 21st and 24th or 25th March respectively) seem highly unlikely. The question requires further investigation. Other available Chronicles make no mention of the dates of these events.

asking for peace. But Mir Jumla rejected it suspecting the peace move to be a dilatory one to gain time for effective resistance.⁵⁰

Meanwhile, on the north bank the Bar-Gohain resorted to a kind of scorched-earth policy against the enemy's advance. He retreated eastwards with his whole army making the inhabitants leave their villages with whatever they could carry and destroy the rest of their properties. Mir Jumla, whose immediate objective was Garhgaon, could not do more than to send occasional detachments across the to harass him ;
Brahmaputra, but, they were beaten off by the Bar-Gohain.

In view of the seriousness of the situation king Jayadhwaj Singha sent Sanatan Kataki to inform the Bar-Gohain and the Nyaisodha Phukan, Commanders-in-Chief respectively of the northern and southern armies, to collect their forces and concentrate at Lakhaugarh.⁵¹ But, the Kataki was captured by the Mughuls on the way.⁵² However, the generals got the report of the capture and the king's order to proceed to Lakhau. They accordingly hastened to that station. The Bar-Gohain, with his army, crossed the Brahmaputra in one night

⁵⁰ Gait : op.cit., p.132.

⁵¹ AB, p.165. According to Gait Lakhau lies at 'what was then the confluence of the Dihing and the Brahmaputra. At the period in question, the latter river flowed down the course of what is now called Lohit river, along the north of the Majuli island, while the Dihing followed the present channel of the Brahmaputra to the south of it, and after receiving the waters of the Disang and the Dikhau, united with the Brahmaputra at its western extremity'. (op.cit., p.133). Wade (Geographical Sketch, p.12) shows Lakhau (Lakhau) on the Uttarpar, probably of the Dihing as described by Gait, and says that it was on an elevated tract.

⁵² Ibid, p.165.

and reached Kukurakata. The Muslims first retreated from that area but advanced again with their boats and surrounded his army. Bar-Gohain seems to have fled to Garhgaon and many officials took refuge in the Majuli.⁵³ Lakhaugarh was strongly guarded under the command of the Dihingia Phukan. The other officers present there were Raja-Sasur, the Bhitaraal Phukan, Kallabaria Phukan, the Hatibarua and Tamuli Daloi. Spies were sent about to watch the advance of the Muslims. The Muslims arrived at Lakhau in force on the 9th March and attacked and defeated the Ahoms assembled there. This was a signal for the king to fly from the capital.⁵⁴

King's Flight And Garhgaon Occupied
By Mir Jumla (17th March, 1662)

Unable to hold their ground against the irresistible advance of the Mughuls almost all the nobles and ministers (Dangarias) assembled at Garhgaon in a depressed spirit. The enemies swept along with great speed and now nearly knocked at its gates. There was all gloom in the capital. The king realized the impossibility of halting the enemy after the main bastions of defence had gone. He was overcome with profound grief at this overwhelming national calamity.⁵⁵

⁵³ AB, p.165 ; Gait : op.cit., p.134 ; J.N.Sarkar : op.cit., p.161.

⁵⁴ AB, p.166.

⁵⁵ The account in AB - 'SMJC', (p.95) says that the king went up to his private chamber and began to weep by holding the hand of his chief queen and the queen consoled him with many words.

He at last decided on a flight from the capital to the secluded hill resorts in the easternmost province of Namrup. He called in the grandson of Tamuli Daloi, Kandu Khamon and Sona Phukan and ordered them to collect one thousand boats for removing the goods to a secluded place before the Muslims encircle the capital. The boats being engaged they could not collect the required number of them, but yet whatever number could be placed at his service carried away the royal stores as far as possible. The boats worked incessantly for two days in removing at least the more important of the goods before the departure of the king himself.⁵⁶ The Neog-Phukan, son of Mau-Barua, was sent to Rajmao to escort the king's mother, wives, brothers, sons and daughters to a hill station. He then placed the capital under the care of Banrukia Bar-Gohain, Atan Dura-Gohain, Bhaga Barpatra-Gohain, Namanial Raja-Sasur, Bhitarual Gohain, Tamuli Daloi's son and a few others and left on a Friday immediately for Charaideo accompanied by Sengdhara Bar-Barua, Raja-Sasur, the Dihingia Phukan and the Nagarial Phukan.⁵⁷ He was anxious to save from the enemy's raids the sacred articles of the two royal temples (Deo-Shals) of god Kham-Lai and god Tai-Kaw-Phi.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ The destinations are not mentioned in the Chronicles, though the king's halting places during the flight are mentioned.

⁵⁷ AB, pp.166-67 ; AB - 'SMJC', p.96.

⁵⁸ It may be remembered that Chao Hso-Ka-Hpa worshipped at Charaideo the gods Kham-Le, Rang-Le and Rang-Bang. These were probably the traditional gods or spirits worshipped by the race from early times with sacrifices of animals. Kham-Lai was probably the same god as Kham-Le and Tai-Kaw-Phi might have been installed after or during Hso-Ka-Hpa's reign.

Having taken into his custody all the articles in them he first proceeded to Raishat.⁵⁹

The three ministers (Dangarias), who were in charge of the capital, employed one hundred elephants and two thousand men to remove from it the materials left behind by the king before the arrival of the Mughuls, yet all could not be removed.⁶⁰ At the same time, Mir Jumla proceeded by the way of Salagarh and Lakhangarh, the latter place being reached on 8th March.⁶¹ The Dihing and the Dikhau, which falls into it, being too shallow for the Mughul fleet to sail up beyond Lakhsu Mir Jumla halted there for three days. A number of deserters from the side of the Ahoms joined him at that place. Leaving his fleet at Lakhsu, some 18 miles north-west of Garhgaon, he set out with his land forces along a high road and reached Devalgaon (Devargaon) on the 13th March after two days' journey and, after ousting the local garrison, seized a large booty. At this place, as related in the Kamrupar Buranji (p.63), he received a five-man peace mission from the nobles of Garhgaon. The mission brought the request that tributes would be paid if they (the Mughuls) advanced no farther. As not a single minister or noble was present in the mission the offer was rejected by Nawab Mir Jumla. The nobles at Garhgaon, on being apprised of it by the members of the mission, sent a fresh four-man mission headed by Phul Barua Phukan. Meanwhile Mir Jumla

59 Raisha of Assamese Buranjis.

60 Bhuyan : Mir Jumla's Asam Akraman, pp.47-48.

61 J.N.Sarkar : op.cit., pp.158,161.

appointed Ali Reza Beg as the Thanadar of Devargaoon and resumed his onward march reaching Gajpur on the 15th March. Phul Barua's mission met the Nawab at Gajpur. But the latter now coming within easy reach of Garhgaon, where a rich booty awaited him, refused to consider the peace offer. Here the news came of the Raja's flight from the capital. He immediately despatched a force to proceed ahead and seize the elephants and other properties of the king at Garhgaon.⁶² Nandang was occupied by the Mughals on the 16th March and on the 17th Mir Jumla made his triumphant entry into the deserted Ahom capital.⁶³ The historian Shihabuddin Talish, who accompanied Mir Jumla in this expedition, described the spoils gained in Assam as enormous. He mentions among them 82 elephants, 3 lakhs of Rupees in cash, 675 pieces of artillery, 1343 camel-swivels, 1200 Ramchangis, 6750 matchlocks, 340 mounds of gunpowder, a thousand and odd boats, and 173 store-houses of paddy, each containing from 10 to 1000 mounds of grain.⁶⁴ Mir Jumla also seized a cannon which threw balls weighing more than two hundred pounds.⁶⁵ He occupied the king's palace and, it is said, he also opened a mint and caused money to be struck at Garhgaon in the name of the Delhi Emperor.⁶⁶

62 S.N. Bhattacharyya : op.cit., p.332 ; Gait : op.cit., p.134.

63 Fathiyah, 47-48 as quoted by Sarkar.

64 Fathiyah, 49-50 as quoted by Sarkar. Ramchangis is a kind of field-gun borne by men.

65 Gait : op.cit., p.134.

66 Gait : op.cit., p.134. It is doubtful whether Mir Jumla had this power unless it was specially conferred upon him by the Emperor, of which there is no evidence.

But the Nawab preferred to make his residence in the town of Mathurapur, which was situated on a high ground, some seven miles south-east of Garhgaon. He entered his quarters at that place on 31st March with his main army. The Ahom capital with the collection of the vast booty was held by a strong garrison under Mir Murtaza. The local civil population came under the new regime of the Mughuls and could not resist the occupation of villages by their armies. Besides Garhgaon the Muslims concentrated themselves in three strategically important centres, namely, Lakhau, Sonarínagar and Tik.⁶⁷ Gradually and steadily they spread out in all directions setting up a regular series of outposts : northwards from the city of Garhgaon at Namdang and Trimohani (Tiromani) ; westwards at Gajpur and Devargaon on the way to Lakhau ; southwards at Deopani and Silpani at the skirt of the Tiru Hill ; and eastwards at Abhoipur, 16 miles from Garhgaon towards Namrup. There were also a line of posts from Lakhau to Gauhati along the Brahmaputra (the Dihing and the Lohit) to control the whole supply route. The Dihing bank was guarded by Jalal Khan with a body of sturdy men from Dariabad.⁶⁸

Jayadhwaj Singha's Harassing Summer Campaigns
Against The Mughuls (May to September, 1662) :

At Raishat (Raisha) Jayadhwaj Singha was joined by

⁶⁷ AB, p.167.

⁶⁸ J.H. Sarkar : op.cit., pp.162-63.

the Bar-Gohain and a number of other nobles and officers. He there held the first war council with them all and drew up plans to fight the Mughuls. Among others, the king's father-in-law, the Kaliabaria Phukan, the Bhitarual Gohain, the Bar-Phukan, Lahan Ahataguria Phukan, Lapet Dihingia Phukan, Haria Deka, the Bar-Gohain, the Dayangia Rajkhowa, Pelon Saringia Phukan, the Bar-Barua and the Nagarial Phukan were present in the council and helped the king in drawing up the war plans relating to strategy, disposition of the forces, method of attacks and liaison with the civil population.⁶⁹

The first step was to employ some officers to negotiate for peace with the Muslims. For this purpose Haria Deka, Kalia Gohain, one Rajkhowa and the son of Tamuli Daloi were deputed. But the peace overtures were again rejected by Mir Jumla just before his occupation of Garhgaon. This made the king move to Tipam and then to Nönrup. Meanwhile all the inhabitants of the deserted villages and the Baruas were brought to Taimung (Dihing : Charagua) where they were given relief and refuge. One son of Latao Phukan was stationed at Shairing (Saring). The Bhitarual Gohain, the Hatibarua and Kandu Khaman were sent across the Lohit to conduct operations on the north bank. The Kaliabaria Phukan and Baduli Phukan engaged themselves in collecting provisions for the army and the king's camp. When these preparations were in full swing

⁶⁹ Ibid. p.167. The Bar-Phukan's identity is not definitely known.

Haria Deka, who was asked to take his station at Barduar with Kolia Gohain, went across to the Muslim camp at Sina (Sinatali) and, either under pressure or temptation, returned with Mir Junla whom he guided to Taimung (Dihing). As Mir Junla advanced to that place Lepet Dihingia Phukan with a few other officers fled to Anitaguri and the Bar-Gohain fled to the Tiru Hill. When the king heard that the Muslims had taken Taimung he, with all the things, transferred his camp to Tipam. During all this time many people surrendered to the Muslims and some deserters from the Ahom camp also joined them as the latter steadily spread out over the country. The king next shifted his camp to Pakdang and then to Uchang in the Nazrup region. At Uchang he ordered his officers to count the number of men that were with him and soon the exact number of 4,960 men were counted out. Among them were some of the king's most trusted officers and great generals like the Benkharia (or Benkharhia) Dura-Gohain named Aten, the Bar-Phukan, Sengdhara (Bengkhova) Bar-Barua, the king's father-in-law, the Neog-Phukan, the Salaguria Rajkhova, Bharali Barua⁷⁰ and Komai-Tamuli of Lanphime family. With the king were also the Tai-Ahom scholars and high priests of the temples such as Labak Bailing, Timak Nara Bailing, Sengdhara Bailing of Charaideo and a few others. In addition there was a large body of expert karis (archers) and hiloidaris (gunners) ready to follow the king's command.⁷¹

⁷⁰ probably Manthir Bharali Barua.

⁷¹ AG, pp.169-172.

Having done this stock-taking of his manpower and collected enough provisions king Jayadvaj decided to attack ~~on~~ the Mughuls undaunted by the fact that the enemy forces were far more superior numerically to his own and whose advantages increased with the surrenders of more and more Assamese people including officers and combatants. The king divided his forces and sent them off under his patriotic generals and officers to attack the enemy at various posts. At Ahataguri Baduli Phukan, Lapet Phukan and Dihingia Phukan launched an attack on the Muslims massacring a large number of them, while the remnants retreated to Sessa. Bhitaraul Phukan distinguished himself by dislodging the Muslims from their stronghold of Sonarinagar by a fierce attack and driving them off to Tick on the west bank of the Dihing and again from the latter place to Sina or Sinatali in the eastern part of the Majuli. The Muslims were hotly pursued down to Sina where he surrounded them with the assistance of reinforcements that came under the command of Lapet Dihingia Phukan, Kandu Khamon and the grandson of the Tamuli Daloi who had been directed by the king to come back from their Chaora (Thora) campaign to help him. Only a Muslim reinforcement arriving from Lakhau relieved the besieged Muslims at this place. The Muslim garrison at Madarguri was attacked by Chiring Phukan, Raja-^{the} Sasur's son and Salaguria and Ahataguria Ahoms, but only after a hard fight the Ahoms could be repulsed. The Bar-Cohain and Tamuli Daloi fought the Muslims at Sessa but could not oust

them from their strong position. Tamuli Daloi and his men were forced to make a precipitate retreat towards the Sossa river where some of his men were drowned. Shairing (Saring) was another battle-ground. Pelan Phukan, Rangai Chetia and the son of Latao Phukan marched against the Muslim concentration here and attacked them in such a way that though with their superior numerical strength they succeeded in driving back the Ahoms, yet they had to withdraw to their main stronghold at Barhat. Lahan Gohain raided the Muslims at Nika and acquired a large booty including one hundred thousand rupees. The Muslims of Kalia Hill suffered a defeat at the hands of Baduli Phukan and the Bar-Gohain and retreated to Barhat. Baduli Phukan followed and attacked them at Barhat and put them to flight towards the Bar Nadi (Brukmaputra). He then set fire to the Muslim dwellings of that area,⁷² though in a subsequent engagement the Ahoms were worsted by a stronger force of the enemy and Baduli Phukan had to make a quick retreat. Thus the whole country under Muslim occupation was once again boiling up with violent commotions of constant fighting, massacres, plunders and marauding activities and the Mughal invaders had no rest, peace or stability. 'The Ahoms had been scared away and not crushed'.

With the advent of the rainy season roads and fields became awfully muddy and flooded immobilizing the Mughal cavalry, but for the Ahoms it afforded an opportunity to

⁷² AB, pp.173-176.

intensify their offensive against the beleaguered enemy. The Abhoipurias, the Ahatagurias and the Dihingias surrounded Taokak and constructed a strong fort near the Taokak river. The Muslims of Devargaon retreated to Lakhan, when the Bhitarual Phukan marched down on them from Sonarinagar. The Muslims made an attack on the Ahom fort at Damarai, but the grandson of Tamuli Daloi repulsed them killing one of their leaders. Lakhan was subjected to repeated attacks by the Ahoms. A group of Ahom officers including the son of Kalisbaria Phukan made a combined attack on the Muslims at Suffry killing a large number of them, while those who escaped took to their heels. A detachment of the Ahom army fell upon the Muslims of Nabari. Here Mir Jumla and Dilir Khan appeared on horseback and made a charge on the Ahoms. At the sight of the vast number of the enemies the Ahoms retreated. According to Niccolao Manucci (Storia, vol. II, p. 99) the Assamese finding that the Mughuls were not easily deterred from boldly advancing used frightful instruments of killing by degrees captured Mughuls thereby terrorising the army of Mir Jumla. His men dared not go to a distance without great precaution.

One officer named Buruk marched against the Muslims at Charaideo, but the latter fled to Tengabari leaving behind their properties. The Ahoms seized many horses and cows and a large quantity of war materials. Buruk next marched against the Muslims of Taimung. At his approach the latter fled to Jatara and Buruk's men set fire to their dwellings. The Muslims

of the fort at Dihing were subjected to repeated attacks. Mir Juala, under the stress of food shortage for his army, sent a messenger named Hakuthun to Bharali Darua (Menthir), the son of Desbarua, with a request to assist him with some provisions. If provisions be supplied Mir Juala promised to go back from Assam with his army. But Bharali Darua refused to help the Nawab. The Ahoms also raised a strong fort at Kakajan mounted with cannon. New dispositions of forces were made from time to time by the Ahom king. The Bhitarual Phukan with two other officers won a victory over the Muslims, who attacked the Ahom fort at the mouth of the Dihali river. The Muslims were also defeated at Chatal after a prolonged engagement.⁷³

Early in May a big assault was made by the Ahoms on Devargaoon which was about to fall when English reinforcements arrived to save it, but on the 10th of that month Gajpur fell to the Ahoms. By a resolute thrust the Ahoms severed the link between the army and the navy of the enemy and established their supremacy over the north bank of the Dihing from Trimohani to the neighbourhood of Lakhau, the Muslim naval port. A naval squadron of ten war-boats and a number of merchant vessels sent by Mir Juala to reconquer Gajpur about the third week of May was attacked and seized by the Ahoms with all the materials. The commanders of the Muslim war-boats fled in a panic. The Ahoms next mustered up their courage to

⁷³ AM, pp. 177-183.

attack Garhgaon and Mathurapur and kept their garrisons under perpetual alarm.

As the rains increased, Mir Jumla's communication with his fleet being cut off and the supply of provisions stopped, the Mughul cavalry horses and draught cattle began to die by the thousand for want of proper food. Food stocks for the army decreased; wheat, pulse, ghee, sugar and such things were exhausted. The soldiers had to eat the flesh of horses and camels and anything of that sort they could find. 'The soldiers', says Sarker, '- Rajput and Muslim alike, were opium - eaters to a man, and they underwent unspeakable agony at being deprived of the accustomed drug'. In the last week of May a desperate attempt was made by Mir Jumla to reopen communications with the fleet. He sent out Farhad Khan, said to be the best fighter in the Mughul army, with a picked force to restore the line of communication by destroying the Ahom strongholds on it and fetch supplies from Lakhau. He somehow reached Tiok when he was intercepted by the Ahoms and a relieving party sent for him failed to advance on account of rising floods. After one week's untold suffering Farhad fought his way back to Trimohani about 6th June narrowly escaping from his own destruction and without being able to carry out his mission. Farhad Khan's failure encouraged the Ahoms to block all roads making it most perilous for the Mughuls to come out of their outposts. Mir Jumla, therefore, withdrew all his thanas and the Ahoms recovered all

their country east of Lakhau.⁷⁴ The Mughals were now confined to Garhgaon and Mathurapur alone without much contact with one another. At the same time the noisy night attacks of the Ahoms daily increased in frequency and ferocity. Delhi ceased to hear anything from Mir Juna and hence the Emperor gave up the Assam expedition as completely lost. It is said that at Delhi 'funeral rites were performed for the Assam expeditionary force'.⁷⁵

Jayadhrav Singha advanced from Namrup, his last resort, to Salaguri, which was at a distance of four days' march from Garhgaon. He was out this time to make a supreme effort to drive out the enemy from Assam and for the purpose appointed Baduli Phukan, a veteran general and brother of the famous Komai Tamuli Bar-Barua of the Lamphima family, as Prime Minister and Commander-in-Chief.⁷⁶ The Phukan built up a six-mile long wall on the bank of the Dilih river, east of Mathurapur and some 20 miles south-east of Garhgaon, connecting the southern hills with the Dihing, obviously to defend the Tipam-Namrup area. The wall is said to be 'broad, high, turretted and strong'. He then commenced a series of night attacks on Mathurapur, while at the same time the Raja of Shairing pressed on Garhgaon. Dilir Khan, the great pillar of the Mughul army, thwarted the attacks on Mathurapur, while Sujan Singh beat off the Raja of Shairing.

74 J.N. Sarkar : op.cit., pp.166-67.

75 J.N. Sarkar : op.cit., p.168, Storia, vol.II, pp.100-101.

76 Ibid, p.168.

Unable to take Matmirapur General Baduli Phukan next tried his arms against Garhgaon. In face of this threat Mir Jumla had already sent Farhad Khan to that city. Baduli's powerful assault on Garhgaon in the night of 8th July routed the Buxari matchlock-men posted on the north side of the palace enclosure. The Ahoms smashed the bamboo railings and occupied half the enclosure causing great 'confusion and tumult' inside. At this stage some among them made a great blunder by setting fire to the thatched roof of a mansion. The blaze enabled the Mughal cavalry men to locate the Ahoms to charge and drive them off beyond the outer walls. In the fight Farhad Khan was wounded.⁷⁷

While the usual night attacks on Garhgaon were continued a massive preparation was made by the Acom General and final assault was delivered on 12th July simultaneously from all the four sides of the capital. But on all fronts the Muslims under the new commandant, Rashid Khan, held their ground and repelled the attackers. Thereafter only minor encounters continued. But in August a very virulent type of epidemic broke out in the Mughal camp at Mathurapur, the daily death-roll running to hundreds. The waters of the streams running down from the hills became poisonous. Many people also suffered from fever. It is shown that Dilir Khan's corps was reduced from 1,500 troopers to about 450. The epidemic was not confined merely to the Mughal camps ; it

⁷⁷ Ibid, pp.168-9.

spread far and wide. It is said that in Baduli Phukan's estimate 230,000 people died in Assam in that year. Sufferings in Mathurapur became so acute that the whole army camp was shifted to Garhgaon.⁷⁸ But much of the stored rice and many of the sick had to ^{be} left behind for want of transport. The Ahoms immediately reoccupied Mathurapur. Again the tempo of militant activities of the Ahoms increased and a third and last grand attack was made on Garhgaon on 15th September, but this, too, was destined to fail as the previous ones. But pestilence overtook Garhgaon too. It is said that 'all kinds of food-stuffs disappeared except coarse red rice (ahm), without salt'.

Mughals Resume Offensive After Rains
(October-December, 1662) : Baduli
Phukan's Desertion Hastened Peace Move :

With the cessation of rains from the latter part of September, 1662, the floods subsided and the communications began to improve. When in the rainy season Mir Jumla lost touch with his fleet the admiral Ibn Musain acted on his own initiative at Lakhau. He withdrew the constantly attacked thana of Devargaon, which was needlessly expensive, and strengthened the vital line of communication with Gauhati and Bengal. Now in September Mir Jumla resumed his offensive. Yadgar Khan, sent to ~~attack the~~ ^{attack the} deliver Devargaon, Assamese garrison under the Bhitarual Phukan at that post and recaptured the town. The Bhitarual Phukan, owing to the king's

78 Ibid, p.171.

mistake in not giving him naval support, retreated to Rangali Chapari in the Majuli.⁷⁹ The communication between Lakhou and Garhgaon was once again restored and supplies came in plenty from the former to the latter place. As the lands dried up the Mughul cavalry took the field and resumed the offensive. Lachit, son of Momai Tamuli Bar-Barua of the Lanphima family, who was stationed in command of a fort on the side of the Tilao (Lohit), was attacked by the Muslims. Lachit gave battle, but was forced to quit the station by the numerically superior enemy, who then seized the fort.⁸⁰ Shairing (Saring) was reoccupied by the Muslims and the local population surrendered to them.⁸¹

It may be noted that the Assamese peasantry demonstrated their wonderful power of mobility in times of national crisis. Threatened with enemy occupation of their localities they left deserted vast tracts of country and went up to hill shelters with all their movable properties including food stocks and cattle. In this movement co-operation and hospitality of the hill tribes, particularly of the Nagas, can be well imagined. During the rainy season of 1662, when the Mughuls were pressed by the Ahoms inside their main forts and their garrisons of the outposts withdrawn, these peasants came down to the plains undoubtedly to harvest their rabi crops, such as amr (ous), which they had sown in the winter before the invasion began. But with the commencement

79 S. N. Bhattacharyya : op. cit., p. 343 ; AB, pp. 181, 182.

80 AB, p. 181.

81 Ibid., p. 181.

of the dry season they again deserted their fields and huts and betook themselves to the hills.⁸² Thus the Mughals could not expect much succour in the form of food grains and other materials from the villages.

Having cleared the line of communication with Bengal Mir Jumla turned his attention to the east to invade the last stronghold of the Ahom king. He ordered Abul Hassan to proceed up the Dihau with a flotilla from Garhgaon to destroy the fortifications of Baduli Phukan on the Dilih river and compel him to submit. Accordingly Abul Hassan set out on the 10th November and reached the Dilih river which he ascended and launched an attack on the defence lines of Baduli. He defeated the Ahoms after a very hard struggle. Mir Jumla made his camp at Bakobari and sent one Omrao to Balaktum. On the 16th of that month Mir Jumla himself advanced to the Dilih and captured the fortifications of Baduli. In his attempt to hunt out the fugitive king in the Namrup area ^{he} arrived at the Dihing on the 20th of November.⁸³ On this day he suffered from a fainting fit. Yet after recovery he resumed the command of his army. At this time Garhganya Raja-Sasur was at Konduguri guarding the Darika front. For the defence of the territory on the opposite bank of the Dihing Atan Bura-Gohain was stationed at Mirkata with his men. Raja-Sasur took his station at Tipam. When the remnants of the army of Assam were pursued

⁸² J.E. Sarkar : op.cit., p.175.

⁸³ Ibid., p.175.

by the Mughuls beyond the Dilih river to a place called Hilikhatal the Bura-Gohain turned on his pursuers at Murkataphat where a fierce fight ensued between Mir Jumla and the Bura-Gohain, both by land and water, which raged for the whole day. All the Omraos of the posts of Tipam, Sinatali, Saring, Silpani, Kalia Hill, Garhgaon, ^{and} Charagua (Dihing) with their men joined in a combined attack on the Bura-Gohain's fort at Murkata. In the evening ^{the} Bura-Gohain's ammunition was exhausted and, in consequence, he was forced to retire from the battle-field to Paniphat, yielding his defence post to the Mughuls.⁸⁴

Baduli Phukan's last hope vanished when the Bura-Gohain was defeated. He preferred to submit to the Mughuls than to carry on a futile war. On the 30th November, 1662, the Ahom Commander-in-Chief, Baduli Phukan, made his submission to the Mughuls at Hilikhatal.⁸⁵ One account says that

⁸⁴ PAB, p.125 ; Wade : op.cit., p.304 ; AB - 'SMJC', p.97.

⁸⁵ Fathiyah, H. Blochmann's translation in JASB, 1873, p.92. Apparently Baduli acted as a traitor. One account suggests there was a serious dissension between him and the Gohains for which he left the Ahom camp. (Wade : op.cit., p.304). The account in PAB (p.125) says that when the king, after the Bura-Gohain's defeat, was retreating to more interior hill recesses Baduli Phukan fell behind him in the march. At this the king became angry with Baduli suspecting him to have submitted to the Mughuls. This was secretly communicated to Baduli on way by the queen, who was his sister, by sending a messenger, a Kukurachua. Hearing this Baduli Phukan submitted to Khan Khana (Mir Jumla) at Hilikhatal. The reason cited here, for which the great general Baduli joined the Mughuls, is not strong enough and hence not acceptable. Most probably he saw no alternative to submission to save the country from utter ruin. It is doubtful whether he deserves the blame usually placed on him. His submission, of course, created misunderstanding about him.

a deputation of Baduli, Saruchakua Gohain and Sala Kataki appeared before Diliir Khen, who commended the prudence, which induced them to depreciate the impending destruction in the interest of the kingdom.⁸⁶ Baduli promised even to 'capture the king and the officers' and pay tributes to the satisfaction of the Mughul masters if the kingdom can be saved and tranquillity restored and for the purpose he be made Raja. Mir Jumla was requested by him to proceed with him to the place of refuge of the king and the nobles. Baduli had behind him a large body of followers including some distinguished nobles who all joined the side of the Mughuls when Baduli had gone over to that side.⁸⁷ Mir Jumla made Baduli ascend the royal palki called Kekuradola and proceeded with him to Salaguri and then to Tipam.⁸⁸ The king entered Namchang.

Baduli's example at once aroused the cupidity of Manthir Bharali Barua to make a bid for a high place under the Mughuls. He sent to the Mughul generals Nanda, Hati and Harigati to convey his promise to capture the Ahom king for them. But king Jayadhwaj Singha, who came to know of this plot, seized Manthir and executed him on the sands of Milatali.⁸⁹

Mughul generals agreed to make Baduli Phukan Raja. They all proceeded to Anataguri where a royal house was built and Baduli Phukan installed as Raja.⁹⁰ When this news

86 Wade : op.cit., p.304.

87 AB, p.183.

88 AB - 'SMJC', p.97 ; Wade : op.cit., p.304.

89 AB - 'SMJC', p.98.

90 AB, p.135. Gait (op.cit., p.139) says that he was only appointed Subadar (Provincial Governor) of the country between Garhgaon and Namrup. Did Baduli ask for Subadarship of a small tract only ? Probably he was made Raja of Assam and he occupied the king's palace at Garhgaon.

reached the king's camp, half the men, who followed the king, came over to Baduli's side.⁹¹ This greatly perturbed the king. After Baduli the king made Atan Dura-Gohain Rajmantri and urged the Dura-Gohain and the Garhganya Rajasasur to accomplish the expulsion or voluntary departure of the invaders by any possible means. In the event of a failure of this task the king had it in his mind 'to seek an asylum in the country of Nara'. His readiness to go to Nara indicates the relations he maintained with the Shan States of Upper Burma, particularly with Mong-Kawng (Mogaung). The Rajmantri then despatched a peace mission of four persons, namely, a Muslim named Sultan, Chandrai, Kamal and Chaturbhuj, with presents to Dilir Khan, offering to pay tribute to the Padshah if Mir Jumla agreed to evacuate the kingdom and restore the country to its former tranquillity. Dilir Khan declined the presents from a vagrant king and informed the mission of Baduli's promise to seize the Patra-Mantri and the king, but gave it the hope that he himself would soon proceed to Namrup^{to}/settle that province and receive any proposals if placed there.⁹² He thus took time to consider the matter with Mir Jumla. About this time an outpost belonging to the Dura-Gohain had seized three emissaries whom Baduli had sent with important intelligence to the enemy's camp. They were taken to the Svargadev in the hill resort where, after^{an}/enquiry, they were found guilty and punished with death.⁹³

91 AB, p.135.

92 AB - 'SMJC', p.98 ; Wade : op.cit., pp.304-5.

93 Wade : op.cit., pp.305-6.

Koch Behar In Revolt :

Meanwhile the serious trend of events in Koch Behar expedited the settlement of affairs in Assam. During the absence of Mir Jumla in his Assam campaign the Mughul Karori imposed an exorbitant tax burden on the people of Koch Behar and set up an elaborate machinery to realize the same. Rigorous exactions of the taxes, which were beyond the capacity of the people to pay, and other oppressions of the Mughul officials drove the contry to the verge of revolt. A body of representatives of the people went and met Prannarayan at Baska and asked for his orders to fight the Mughuls and drive them out of the country. They also requested the Raja to come down to assume the power. The Dharma Raja of Bmtan, however, advised Prannarayan to proceed cautiously and not to precipitate at that stage a war against the powerful Mughuls. Prannarayan was just biding time, and when Mir Jumla reached Garhgaon and became irretrievably locked up in his struggle with the Ahoms he gave the call for an attack on the army of occupation. The people surrounded the ^{and killed many Mughuls.} Karori, the Thanadar and the Faujdar/Isfundiar Beg in his helplessness pointed out that he was on duty there under the Padshah and not under Mir Jumla and further that he had no quarrel with the people of Koch Behar. He, however, asked for allowing him to quit the country unmolested. His request was granted. Prannarayan came down with a powerful army and

reoccupied his capital. The report of this revolt at the back was another matter which weighed in favour of peace with Assam. But, unfortunately for the Mughuls, even after peace, owing to ^{his} serious illness and death of Mir Jumla, they could not interfere with the affairs of Koch Behar. Dilir Khan had to proceed straight to Dacca and then to Delhi.⁹⁴

Peace Treaty Of Ghilajharighat, 22 January, 1663 :

Dilir Khan had now advanced to Tipam when another peace delegation of two Katakis and one Suham Garia (a Muslim) from the Bura-Gohain met him with a proposal to offer a war indemnity of 90 elephants and three lakhs rupees in return for the Mughul generals' withdrawal from Assam. When the proposal was discussed with Mir Jumla the latter pointed the enormous cost at which the Mughul army was raised and brought over to Assam and so there could be no question of return from the proximity of the Svarga Maharaja who must be pursued to his last refuge.⁹⁵

'But the entire army refused to enter Namrup, whose very air was said to be fatal to all forms of life'. The obstacles inside that region would be insurmountable as the cavalry would not work in the wilds of the hills and the Mughuls could not move without their horses. They fully realized that as foot-soldiers they were no match for the

⁹⁴ Kamrupar Barenji, pp.75-79 (see Prannarayan's letter to Jayadvaj Singha) ; The Koch Behar State, p.237.

⁹⁵ Wade : op.cit., p.305 ; AB - 'SMJC', p.98.

Ahoms and in the hills they would be an easy prey to their guerilla bands. Further, no provisions could easily come to the inaccessible hilly regions from outside by land or water. This fear was aggravated when just at this time the news arrived of a famine in Dacca, whence the bulk of the provisions used to come for the Mughal army in Assam. The gloomy prospect of another flood season made the invaders shudder and give up the hope of survival when the king and his loyal warriors were still secure in their mountain fastnesses to pounce upon them with the burst of monsoons and floods. On top of all the Koch rising in the rear worried the minds of the leaders. The net effect of all these adverse factors was that the soldiers and officers alike plotted to desert their General and return home. Dilir Khan's mediation and counsel alone made Mir Jumla give up the wild-geese chase and agree to peace proposals.

But Baduli was apposed to any peace talks between the Ahoms and the Mughals inasmuch as a conclusion of peace would mean his overthrow from the position of Raja. He asserted that his coming over to the side of Mir Jumla alone so weakened the Ahom king that the Rajmentri now had to sue for peace. But Dilir Khan and Mir Jumla were not convinced and demanded from Baduli the fulfilment of his promise to seize the person of the king and also the Gohains and for that purpose gave him the assistance of the Mughal army. As the last attempt to compel the king to submit Baduli's

brother Maupiya proceeded with the Padshah's men to Mekurikhowa and fought the Ahoms with casualties to both sides, but the Mughul force of the renegade suffered a defeat at the hands of the Ahoms and fled to Tipam.⁹⁶ This extinguished the future of Baduli and his followers and hastened the move for peace. 'All that the wicked Baduli had boasted', remarked Mir Jumla, 'proved false'.⁹⁷

The terms of the treaty were negotiated by Dilir Khan and the Bura-Gohain representing their respective governments.⁹⁸ Over and above a huge war indemnity in terms of gold, silver and elephants and hostages for the unpaid part of it Mir Jumla also demanded a daughter of the Ahom king for the Emperor's son. Jayadhwaj Singha was at first mortified to have to send his daughter to the Muslim Emperor's harem at Delhi, but he was persuaded by the Bura-Gohain to concede it in the greater interest of peace and tranquillity of the country and also for creating an opportunity to ask for the restoration of the kingdom with some defined boundaries free from the Muslim army of occupation. Thus an informal agreement was reached on the terms of the proposed peace treaty and Nawab Mir Jumla communicated them to Emperor Aurangzeb and received his approval in a

⁹⁶ Kamrupar Buranji, p.64.

⁹⁷ Ibid, p.65.

⁹⁸ At one place in AB (p.185) it is stated that Baduli told the Muslims to make peace after having talk with the Katakis, an obvious reference to Rajmantri's peace mission to Dilir Khan. But this appears to be wrong, for such a consent by Baduli would mean undermining his own position as Raja or Governor.

congratulatory reply for such a successful termination of his Assam campaign. The Emperor was also pleased to confer on him the title of Shirurshah Nasir Mauli.⁹⁹ The treaty was finalized and signed on the following terms :-¹⁰⁰

1. King Jayadvaj Singha shall offer his daughter¹⁰¹ to the Emperor's son accompanied by the daughter of Tipam Raja, Princess Gabharu.¹⁰²

2. The king shall deliver immediately a war-indemnity of 20,000 tolas of gold, 1,20,000 tolas of silver,¹⁰³ and 20 elephants (14 tuskers and 6 female elephants).

3. Rupees 3,00,000 and 90 elephants shall be delivered during the course of one year with effect from the month of magh (January), 1663 in instalments of one lakh rupees every four months and 30 elephants (10 big and 10 small tuskers and 10 makhundis) at the end of three months and the remaining 60 elephants (20 big and 20 small tuskers and 20 makhundis) in twelve months' time from magh (January), 1663.¹⁰⁴

4. Thereafter Assam shall pay annually a regular tribute of 20 elephants (10 tuskers and 10 makhundis).

99 AB - 'SMJC', p.100.

100 The terms of the Treaty are embodied very explicitly in Mir Jumla's letter to Aurangzeb. See AB - 'SMJC', pp.99-100.

101 In Wade's account the name of the Princess is given as Langsingh or Nang-Seng as properly spelt, daughter of his queen Pakhari, Momai Tamuli's daughter. (AB, ed. by Dutta, p.22.

102 Gabharu was sent at the suggestion of the Bura-Gohain and Raja-Sasur. See AB - 'SMJC', p.101.

103 In Mir Jumla's letter to Aurangzeb 12,000 rupees (one rupee = 1 tola) are only mentioned. See AB - 'SMJC', p.99. This figure is also mentioned in Tamuli Phukan's Assam Buranji, p.39.

104 makhundi, female elephant. Mir Jumla's letter to Aurangzeb - AB - 'SMJC', p.100. This part of the indemnity could not be paid at a time as the resources were all exhausted in the war and the country became desolate.

5. Pending the full payment of the indemnity, the Bar-Gohain, the Bura-Gohain, the Barpatra-Gohain and the Garhganya Rajmantri Phukan shall each send a son¹⁰⁵ as hostage to be held by the Nawab.

6. All territories of Assam, including the province of Darrang, west of the Bharali river on the north bank and those including the States of Dimarua, Beltala and Rani of the Nakkati Rani west of the Kallang river on the south bank were to be annexed to the Mughul empire.

7. The people carried off as captives by the Ahoms from Kamrup and other parts of the Mughul dominions were to be released, as also the wife and children of Baduli Phukan detained in prison.

The Bura-Gohain proposed that the Mughul army, after the emancipation of all Assam prisoners, should retire beyond the Bar Nadi and the Asurar Ali and receive the hostages on the frontier. The imperial General promised to liberate all the king's subjects except Baduli and a few other. He also said that confident of the pleasure that the Emperor would have at the valuable acquisition of the Princess he would venture to establish the Bar Nadi and the Asurar Ali as the limits of the kingdom reminding at the same time that in the time of Parikshit the Bharali and Kajalimukh formed its boundary. Mir Jumla meant thereby that the entire territory

¹⁰⁵ In Mir Jumla's letter to the Emperor Bura-Gohain's nephew is mentioned as a hostage, not his son, who died in the meantime. S.K. Bhuyan gives his nephew's name as Ramrai.

of the old Koch kingdom of Kamrup should now come immediately under the Mughuls, the conquerors of the Koches, but he would see that the Emperor agreed to the territorial claim made just before the invasion. Hence by arrangement the Princesses¹⁰⁶ were escorted by the Bura-Gohain and Raja-Sasur to Paniphat in Tipam, whence a body of envoys and attendants escorted them away to the place of the Nawab. On 5th January, 1663, the Ahom king's daughter, the hostages and a part of the indemnity reached the Mughul camp. With the Princesses were sent one hundred male and one hundred female attendants and also large dowries consisting of gold, silver, valuable apparels and ornaments. The Mughul generals and high officers were also appeased with presents. Nawab Mir Jumla was presented with fifteen elephants and Dilir Khan with five elephants. Both Shaista Khan and Rashid Khan were offered one elephant each. Even the imperial envoys (Ahadis) and messengers of high officers received some presents for their good services.¹⁰⁷ Dilir Khan also sent a number of presents to Jayadhvaj Singha and his officers.

106 The Buranji accounts are confusing whether one or two Princesses were sent and whether they were sent together. But from Mir Jumla's letter to the Emperor and other statements in the Buranjis the fact becomes clear that there were two Princesses sent at the same time, but only the Tipam Princess's dowry of 20 elephants was delivered to Godai at Mekurikhowa in the month of Chaitra of A.D. 1663 and of these elephants 19 died on the way. See Tr. 84 (DHAS), vol. II, Part I, p. 81.

107 The Emperor's envoys (Ahadis) Dur Beg and Rastum Beg received each 200 tolas of gold and 1,000 rupees and Dilir Khan's messenger Godai Parkath received 100 tolas of gold and 500 rupees.

Before the departure of the generals a message was sent to the Ahom king to assume the reins of government with the assurance that the Emperor's fame would be greatly enhanced on the arrival of the Princess. Mir Jumla also expressed his full confidence in the sincerity of the king and his nobles to see them implement the terms of agreement to their entire satisfaction.

On 10th January, 1663, Mir Jumla began his return march and his army became jubilant at it. The Assam campaign so seriously told upon the Nawab's health that he had to travel by palki to Pandu through many obstacles on the way. He reached Pandu on 11th February and halted there for eleven days to settle the administration of Kamrup. Rashid Khan was already appointed Faujdar of Kamrup. He, however, expressed reluctance to continue in this post, but being reprimanded by the Emperor he held the post and Muhammad Beg was appointed Thanadar of Kajali under the Faujdar.

Meanwhile the Rajmantri returned all the people belonging to the Padshah. Dilir Khan was so pleased to see the released masses of people returning to their own country that he immediately sent presents of precious things to the Ahom king and announced 'Worthy Rajmantri; he did not deviate from his words'. The Padshah's men also highly praised the Ahom rulers. But Mir Jumla, contrary to his agreement, compelled 12,000 subjects of the king including women and

and children to leave Assam and accompany him to Bengal. Among them were some of the important officers of the kingdom, such as Luthuri Chetia of the Upper Dayang, the Rajkhowa of the Lower Dayang, the son of Bhelai, Laluk Gohain, Dighala Hazarika, Jalakaria Hazarika, Marangial Hazarika, Jakai-sukia Lahkar Rajkhowa had to go with their families. Talish says some Muslims and a few Assamese of the Namrup area voluntarily accompanied the Mughul army and it may be true. In addition, the Dhekeris, who had been transferred from Kamrup to Assam by the Bar-Phukan and Piksai Chetia after the flight of Iutfullah Shirazi (Nathula) from Gauhati and defeat of Bhabanath Qazi, were also summoned and taken away. There were others, who sided with the Mughuls during the worst days of the Ahom king and hence had to quit Assam with the Mughuls. In this group were some of the leading figures like Baduli Phukan, his brother Maupiya, Hari Deka's sons Jagat and Raghunath Majunder, Raghunath's son Manohar Kakati, and a few others who went away with their wives and children. Earlier Mir Jumla's expedition drove the Barchetia of Marangi into the Kachari country. Benrukia Languchong Bar-Gohain continued to stay on the Tira Hill of the Nagas. Leaving Rashid Khan at Gauhati as Faujdar of Kamrup and the Ahom hostages with him Mir Jumla sailed down.¹⁰⁸ On 28th February

108 Kamrupur Duranji, p.66; AB - 'SMJC', p.102; PAB, p.128. A list is given in PAB (p.128) of the Muslim chiefs and Hindu Rajas who fought on the side of the Nawab and accompanied him in his return journey. Some of them were Dilir Khan, Rashid Khan, Mena Khan, Farhad Khan, Agar Khan, Manohar Khan, Mansur Khan, Isli Hussain, Azgar Khan, Raja Indranarayan, Raja Indra-man, Raja Indra Ghosh, Kala Raja, Raja Jagdev, Raja Gandharva Rai, Man Singh, Jayanta Singh, Dal Singh, Pratap Singh, Jay Singh and others.

he reached Baritala where his condition became very serious. He suffered from pleuresy and fever and in the last stage alarming complications developed. Niccolao Manucci says that he fell ill with a retention of urine.¹⁰⁹ He gave up the idea of reconquering Koch Behar in person. On the advice of his physicians he went to Khijirpur and died on 31st March, 1663. Aurangzeb expressed regret for his death but he also got rid of a very wealthy and powerful general whom he had feared. He once said 'I have not seen any efficient person like Mir Jumla'. (Storia, I, p.237)

Mir Jumla was probably the greatest general of Aurangzeb and a owner of twenty maunds of diamonds. He usually mounted on a hardy pony. Added to the strength of his renowned Mughul cavalry were his warships constructed for him by the Dutch and English experts manned by European sailors, admirals and soldiers. There is mention of even Muscovites (Russians) in the Mughul army in his Koch Behar and Assam campaigns.¹¹⁰ His victory in Assam was chiefly due to the destruction of the Ahom navy mainly of bacharis which had to this day complete mastery over the Brahmaputra, the main artery of supplies from Bengal to Assam, a riverine geographical trough. That destruction is to be attributed to the European co-operation in the Mughul army

¹⁰⁹ Storia, vol.II, p.101.

¹¹⁰ English Factories in India, XI, Dutch records (7th March and 10th Oct., 1661) and EEI, X, 193, as referred to by Jagadish Narayan Sarkar in his research work The Life of Mir Jumla, (Thacker Spink, Calcutta, 1951.), pp.219-220.

with their advanced types of European-made war-ships and European weapons and methods of fighting to which the major Ahom forts, all on river sides, became vulnerable for assaults. In Koch Behar, it is said, and also in Assam he forbade plunder of property and rape of women by the soldiers and camp-followers and severely punished such offenders. But in Assam it was not much in evidence, though the issue of such orders might be true. He, of course, once denounced Farhad Khan's atrocities on the villagers and released the prisoners under the Ahoms and did such other things, but Muslim soldiers overran the whole territory plundering away even household articles and domestic animals and, where possible, committed savage outrages and inhuman massacres of the inhabitants. The Ahoms captured by Mughul scouts were cruelly scourged and then beheaded. The object of inflicting such horrible torture on the Ahoms was to force them to join the Mughuls.¹¹¹ The Ahoms too retaliated by frightful methods of torture and killing. According to the unnamed Dutch sailor, Mir Jumla offered the Dutch Rs. 50 for 'every Head' they 'brought him' and Rs. 100 for each prisoner captured alive. On the other hand, those who helped the Mughuls were treated kindly.¹¹² In short, he adopted all manner of wily methods to overcome the resistance of the people and conquer Assam. Talish regrets that in spite of the Raja's cruelty and Mir Jumla's kindness, the Assamese 'did not at all become submissive to the people of Islam'.

¹¹¹ Glanvius, 163-64. Also E and D. VII (for Khafi Khan's account) referred to by Jagadish Narayan Sarkar.

¹¹² Sarkar's Mir Jumla, p. 250.

He had no respect for the Hindu religion. As in the Karnatak, so in Assam, he amassed enormous treasures by sacking temples.¹¹³ He shot down the pinnacle of the famous temple of Dergaon, razed the temple to the ground and pillaged it. He also made the thakur take beef and embrace Islam.¹¹⁴ He was a man with inordinate greed for wealth, power and fame. According to Monsieur de Thevenot (Travels into the Levant, Ch.8, p.102) he had the ambition to become king of Bengal and Thomas Bourey says (A Geographical Account, 143-44) that after the conquest of Assam he proposed to march 'against S. Tartaria'. With the aid of the traitors, who joined him, he even dug out the treasures offered to the dead from the graves (maidam) of the Svargadevs and shipped them away to Dacca. He did not spare even their skulls and bones.¹¹⁵ Among the graves excavated were those of Barjana Cohain, Lachit Cohain, Laluk Cohain, Chao Hso-Hseng-Npa or Burha Raja, Garhganya Raja, Khora Raja, Bhaga Raja and Nariya Raja.¹¹⁶ The unnamed Dutch navigator Glanius, who came to Assam with the naval force of Mir Jumla,

113 Sarkar : Life of Mir Jumla, p.249.

114 AB, p.173 ; AB - 'SMJC', p.95 ; Wade : op.cit. p.301.

115 Ibid., p.96 ; Storia, vol.II, p.100. It was the practice of the Ahom kings to bury the dead bodies of the Svargadevs, queens, nobles of the highest rank and even of great generals of enemies, who fell in Assam, in a specified sacred area adjoining the Charaideo Hill. All belongings of the deceased which included enormous amounts of treasures (gold, silver, diamonds, coins and precious utensils) were buried along with the dead body. Over these graves huge mounds of earth were raised. The vault inside was made of bricks and wooden frames with a door. The whole structure is a costly one and with the high mound is a great monument. There were more than a hundred such graves in rows and still there are about twenty standing with their majestic appearance in the silent and solemn atmosphere of the hill-side.

116 AB - 'SMJC', p.96.

wrote 'As for riches, we wanted them not, having found good store in Graves'. Talish states that from the ten vaults which were dug open nearly ninety thousand rupees on all accounts were realized. One of the marvels to the Mughuls was that from the vault of one of the queens, who had been buried 80 years ago, a gold betel-casket was extracted, within which the betel-leaf was still green.¹¹⁷ Mir Jumla sent to Dacca huge boats loaded with the booty taken at Garhgson and other places of Assam and Manucci, who wrote about it, was an eye witness of them at Dacca. These boats had extremely high poops, carved with 'ugly, fear-inspiring faces'.¹¹⁸ The booty sent was one mainly of treasures and armaments seized in the course of the invasion. He also seized and sent to Dacca some of the expert Ahom manufacturers of guns and gunpowder. For, he was struck to see the high quality and efficacy of Ahom artillery and gunpowder. He, of course, failed to secure, in spite of his best efforts, any Assamese elephant driver of repute. (Fathiyah, 34, 56, 64 ; JBORS. I, 186, 192 ; JASB, 1872, p.78).

At Delhi Princess Nang-Seng alias Ramani Gaharu (E.T.P. p.39) was, according to Maasir-i-Alangiri (73), as referred to by Sarkar in his Mir-Jumla (p.270), married to Prince Muhammad 'A'zam, Governor of Gujarat, and was made to assume the name of Rahamat Banu. But, later on the death of Aurangzeb on the 3rd March, 1707, 'A'zam died in the battle of Jajau near Agra during the fratricidal war of succession by fighting against his brother Mu'azzam, later Shah 'Alam I.

¹¹⁷ JASB (1872), p.66.

¹¹⁸ Storia, vol.II, p.100.

As to the position of Tipam Raja's daughter nothing is known. Talish mentions Tipam Raja's sons and not a daughter, but Alamgirnama and most of the Buranjis of Assam and also Mir Jumla's letter to Aurangzeb, as reproduced in the Buranjis, speak of 'the daughter.'

Jayadvaj Singha Back To Bakatha, March, 1663 :

After the departure of Mir Jumla king Jayadvaj Singha returned to Namrup from Manchang and then to Tongchang (Tengacha) by the way of Lechang. At Tongchang he made his first camp and took rest. Thereafter he came to Mekurikhowa in February. As the capital at Garhgaon had been devastated by the Mughuls the king next moved to Bakatha, which he made the seat of government. All officers of the State, who had been scattered during the war, were then summoned by the Rajmantri to assemble at Bakatha. The king proceeded to punish those who betrayed the country to the enemy. The Raja-Sasur,¹¹⁹ who, after his dismissal from the Bar-Phukanahship, helped the Mughuls to enter central Assam by the Diyu road, pretended illness and committed suicide by swallowing poison instead of facing the trial. Banrukia Languchong Bar-Gohain, who was the Commander-in-Chief of the north-bank army, was accused for not reinforcing the southern army, which had to bear the main brunt of the

¹¹⁹ the identity is not quite clear from the versions of the different texts. According to S.K. Bhuyan he was Namanial Raja-Sasur, elder brother of Garhganya Raja-Sasur Rajmantri Phukan. But for the reasons already cited and also for different versions in the records left by the Muslim historians the identity of the Bar-Phukan as well as of the Rajmantri is still not established beyond doubt.

enemy pressure. The Bar-Gohain, who was not wholly unjustified in his stand as regards this question, was also charged for not returning in time from the Tiru Hill to help the king and was therefore put into prison. The Ghora Konwar, the son of Tamuli Daloi and Gajpuria Hatibaru were scourged and chained for deserting the king.¹²⁰ Kath Narottam was dismissed from his post of Majindar and Nazirahatiya Mayur Ganak was appointed Majindar in his place. Domai Deka (Neog Gohain) was appointed Bar-Phukan and sent to Kaliabar where his office was established. He died at Kaliabar and the vacancy was filled by Langi Bar-Phukan.¹²¹ This way of punishing people was deprecated by Raja-Sagur Rajmantri Phukan, who pointed out to the king how it would affect great numbers of his subjects, high and low, resulting in wide-spread disaffection in the society and consequent loss of internal stability of the kingdom. Jayadhvaj Singha realized the significance of the Rajmantri's timely warning and gave up the hunt for offenders under the abnormal war conditions.

When Jayadhvaj Singha was at Namrup Prannarayan was at Baska, both fugitive. In their adversity they both exchanged letters¹²² in sympathy for each other and making a clean breast of the mistakes they committed under the influences of treacherous and ambitious ministers. During Mir Jumla's campaigns in Assam.

120 AB - 'SMJC', p.101 ; Kamrupar Buranji, p.67.

121 Assam Buranji (1646-1681 A.D.), p.23.

122 See for some of these letters Kamrupar Buranji, Chapter 10. They also give a picture of the political developments of Assam and Koch Behar prior to and during the invasions of Mir Jumla.

Raja Jashamatta Rai of Jayanta, called Landha Sultan, sent two messengers, Ramai Daloi and Niroi, to Jayadhvaj Singha, but they could not reach the Ahom king as they were captured with the letter by the Mughals on the way. But just after Mir Jumla's departure in May-June of 1663 the Jayanta Raja wrote to the Svargadev expressing his deepest feelings of sympathy for him. 'Jayanta and Garhgaon are not two different cities', said Raja Jashamatta, 'I feel afflicted in my mind, as if, it was my country and not yours that was invaded (by the Mughals). ... now let us be united in friendship so as to be able to retaliate upon the Bangals.' Another letter in a similar tone was addressed by the Nartangia Chief, Manik Singha, to the Ahom king. He wrote - 'If ten to twenty thousand men (of my State) would have fallen for your service yet I would not have been sorry'. These letters were delivered to the Svargadev at his Court at Bakatha.¹²³

Jayadhvaj Singha had a great desire to have a look into the condition of the ruined capital of Garhgaon. Accordingly he went there in spite of the advice of his priests to the contrary and when the main gate of the city was opened for him he became choked with grief and wept bitterly at the condition of the beautiful city from which he had been away so long in the wilds of Namrup. It is said that he was so much shocked at the sight of Garhgaon that his tears of grief, which did not stop, developed into a disease and he did not long survive.

¹²³ See for the letters JB, pp.22-25.

He came back to Bakatha and fell ill with severe diabetes. Knowing his end drawing near he called in to his side the three ministers (Dangarias) of State, the Phukens and Rajkhowas and made an appeal to all to be united and to reconstruct the shattered kingdom delivering it from the yoke of the enemy. He died on the 25th of Martik, Sak 1585 (A.D. 1663).

**Jayadvaj Singha's Character And
Miscellaneous Events Of His Reign :**

Jayadvaj Singha was the first Tai-Ahom king to embrace Hinduism of the Vaisnava cult in A.D. 1654. In that year he performed a yajna at Galpur Ghat by installing the image of the deity, Govinda Thakur, at that place and received initiation (saran) from a Vaisnava priest called Niranjan Bapu. He there dedicated to the service of the god (Govinda Thakur) extensive tracts of land free of revenue and many workers (paiks). This was recorded in a copper-plate grant of the king. It is said that he was the first Ahom king to introduce the system of copper-plate grants which was followed by his successors.¹²⁴ He also visited the Visvanath temple on the north bank and made many presents to the Brahmins. Another great Satra king Jayadvaj Singha established was that of Dakshinpat, of which

¹²⁴ H.S.B., op.cit., p.47 ; AB - 'SMJG', p.89 ; Tr.94 (DHAS), vol.V, Part IV, p.309. Niranjan Bapu or Niranjan Dev was the son of Vasudev and grandson of Kavisuryya Kandali Goswami who came from Kanaupur. Niranjan was a disciple of Bar Gopaldev and became the first Satradhikar of the Auniati Satra, which was established by his royal disciple, Jayadvaj Singha, with the installation of Govinda-murti.

the first Satradhikar was Vanamalidev Gosain. He was the spiritual preceptor of Maharaj Prannarayan with his residence at Madhupur. In the Sak 1575 (A.D. 1653-54) the king invited Vanamali Gosain, a well-versed Pundit in the Sastras and a distinguished desciple of Damodardev, from Koch Behar and settled him with a Satra (Vaishnava monastery) at Jakhala-bandha (in the Nowgong district), whence the Satra was transferred to Jatakara after some days. The Gosain continued there until he was finally established as the Satradhikar of the Satra of Dakshinpat at Rangalibahar in the Majuli¹²⁵ of Upper Assam. The main deity of the Dakshinpat Satra is Yadavarai (Vishnu). Jayadhvaj Singha granted revenue-free land, paiks and sevalts to the Satra in the name of Yadavarai. At the time of his death the king invited Vanamalidev to his residence at Bakatha, took blessings from him and, as he had no son, made over the rule of the kingdom to the Gosain, Vanamalidev, just before he breathed his last. According to the records of the Satra Vanamalidev ruled the country until after a brief period, a successor in the person of Chakradhvaj Singha was placed on the throne.¹²⁶ Jayadhvaj Singha's initiation to Hinduism did not affect much his faith in the

125 Amanatulla Ahmed : Koch Biharer Itihās, I, p.164 ; Sri Sri Vanamali Dev Charitra, pp.52,59. The word majuli means a large island in the Lohit or Brahmaputra. There is one in Upper Assam formed by the Lohit and the Brahmaputra and another between Hajo and Pandu in Kamrup.

126 Tr.94 (DHAS), vol.V, Part IV, p.319. It is said that the management of the destructible temporal affairs of the State was not thought by the Gosain as a proper function of the spiritual gurus and hence he handed over that charge to Chakradhvaj Singha when he was chosen for the throne.

traditional religion of the Ahoms. Even during his flight from the capital his first concern was to save the Ahom priests and the sacred articles of the temples at Charaideo erected for the worship of his racial gods (phis). He duly worshipped ghum and sheng and made offerings to Lengdon. But there is no doubt that he was the first Tai-Ahom king to give official recognition to the Hindu religion and shower benefits on the Brahmins, whose influence began to increase in the royal Court. He paid more attention to the new faith and neglected the worship of his ancestral gods.

As the eleventh Pagan king Narathihapate was Tarok-pye-min, 'the king who ran away from the Taroks (Tartars)' in the eyes of the Burmese people, so king Jayadhwaj Singha was, by analogy, Mughul-pye-min, 'the king who ran away from the Mughuls' in the eyes of the Assamese people, who since then called him by the nickname of Bhaganiya Raja, 'The Raja who took to flight'. It is no stigma to take to flight when the enemy is too powerful. 'When it is impossible to ward off danger from all sides', says Kautilya in his Arthashastra, 'a king should run away, leaving all that belongs to him ; for, if he lives his return to power is certain as was the case with Suyatra and Udeyana'.¹²⁷ In the case of Jayadhwaj Singha there was no question of his surrender in spite of his being forced to leave the capital. He continued to direct his operations from the midst of the hills and jungles which

127D.R. Bhandarkars Lectures on the Ancient History of India (Calcutta University, 1919), p.358.

at once formed a bastion beyond the capacity of the proud Mughul Omraos to surmount. He could have probably held his ground well and starved the Mughuls to surrender in the next flood season, had not in the meantime some of the stalwarts like the Raja-Sasur Bar-Phukan, Haria Deka, Baduli Phukan and Manthir Bharali Barua gone over to the enemy thereby undermining the morale of large sections of the Assamese population. Jayadhvaj Singha's private life may have suffered from lapses,¹²⁸ but that he was a great patriot is beyond doubt. He had also a burning ambition to extend the frontiers of his kingdom to the Karatoya, which was once reached during the reign of Hso-Hun-Mong by the redoubtable Ahom general, Ton-Kham. According to the Alamgirnama the Ahoms, during Jayadhvaj Singha's reign, plundered and laid waste the country almost as far as Dacca itself.¹²⁹

During Jayadhvaj Singha's reign the Kacharis occupied Baghargaon in the Ahom territory. The Bar-Phukan wanted to seize the Kachari Raja Biradarpa. It was communicated to the Kachari Raja by the Garhganya Handikoi, who also advised the Raja to revive old friendship with the Svargadev for averting such an eventuality. Thereafter regular exchanges of embassies between

128 For instance, he kept as his wife the chief queen's elder sister, who had been married to the Fokhuriparia Bura-Gohain, Poali (Assam Buranji : 1648-1681 A.D., p.5) and had a male child. She was later made Parbatia queen and, in the meantime, procured the murder of her former husband. The Chief queen was Raja-Sasur Naobaicha Phukan's daughter. - AB - 'SMJC', p.87.

129 See also Stewart's History of Bengal (Calcutta, 1903), p.324. The available Assamese sources, however, do not present a clear corroborative evidence of this advance. (See also Gait : op.cit., p.128).

Biradarpanarayan and Jayadhvaj Singha continued to the end of the latter's reign. During this period the Ahom Court laid special stress on the enforcement of proper diplomatic formalities in the relations between the two countries. The Kachari Raja, on his part, repeatedly reminded the Ahom king to implement his assurance to give a princess to him in marriage for the formal establishment of the claim on him as a protected Raja of the Svargadev. The Ahom nobles throughout adopted dilatory tactics in this matter as the Kachari Raja avoided coming in person to take the bride under various pretences. It was a question of prestige on both sides. The matter continued to be negotiated through diplomatic channels but remained unfulfilled owing to the outbreak of war with the Mughals.¹³⁰

Jayadhvaj Singha

He subdued the Lakma Nagas who had hunted the heads of two men and four children in the Ahom territory. There were troubles from them several times. At last an amicable adjustment was reached and the Lakma Raja offered tributes to the king and the latter allowed him the possession of the hill called Shangdoi-mlan-doi as prayed for. In 1655 the Miris of the village, Marekebat in Sadiya killed a few subjects of the Ahom king. The Ahoms attacked the Miris who then sent their Miri Katekis suing for peace and agreeing to pay tribute to the king. A group of persons with the Bar-Gohain conspired against the king but they received deterrent punishment.

130 For fuller details see Kachari Buranji, pp. 37-49.

In 1660 there was a feud between Jasamanik, the Jayanta Raja and his grandson Pramatha. The latter asked the Gubha Raja to come over to his side with his army. But the Gubha Raja offered shelter to Pramatha without himself going to him as he wanted. This enraged Pramatha who devastated four villages of Gubha Raja. Gubha Raja then appealed to the Kachari Raja for help and the latter wanted to send to his assistance the army of 7,000 men stationed in the Kachari country by the Ahom king, obviously to remove the army from the country. But the Ahom king's men refused to leave their station. Gubha Raja, being helpless, intended to join with the Koches, but the Ahoms threatened him that in that case he would not be allowed to rule that country. The Gubha Raja then joined the Ahoms in 1660 and paid homage to Jayadhravaj Singha whose suzerainty he acknowledged. The Ahom king then gave him protection and presents and established him at Khagarijan (Nowgong) with boundaries fixed.¹³¹

During the rainy season of 1652 Jayanta guests visited the Ahom Court and paid homage to the king by offering many large boats, eight gold seats and one hundred and forty umbrellas. The Jayanta guests made a prayer to Jayadhravaj Singha to give back to their Raja the part of their dominions ceded to the 'king of Mungdunshunkham' as also the provinces of Dimarua, Kaphanali¹³² and Kaoban. The Ahom king replied

¹³¹ AB, pp.156-57.

¹³² probably Gubha.

that all those areas and provinces were merged in the territory of his kingdom and distributed among some of the frontier Chiefs and so it was not possible to return the provinces. But the guests were given a quantity of gold as a price for them.¹³³ Yet during May-June of 1663 Jayanta Raja wrote to Jayadhvaj Singha letters expressing his deep sympathy for and co-operation with the Ahom Raja. There is mention of visit of a Sam Katak¹³⁴ (Sam ambassador) to the Court of Jayadhvaj Singha in 1662. The Katak 'pledged fidelity' to the king 'by drinking'.¹³⁵ He presented to the king of Mong-Dun-Hsun-Kham a gold flute, a silver plate, a quantity of vermilion, a satin cloth, a stand, a drum and an under-cloth. The king also gave many presents and necessary instructions to the Katak before his departure.

One of the notable achievements of Jayadhvaj Singha's reign in the internal affairs of the country was the planned settlement of villages from Nara to Bengal border making a suitable distribution of the artisans and men of different professions all over the country. The author of this plan was the talented Momai Tamuli Bar-Barua. Some of the important public works of Jayadhvaj Singha were the Chouni Ala, a high road, well-known to this day constructed under the supervision of Baduli Phukan, Kerimeri garh and Machchowar garh with bastions and gun emplacements. He also

¹³³ AB, pp.146-7.

¹³⁴ The word is Sham kun and the name of the Sham kun is Phu-pai-mong. The translator writes that the ambassador was sent by the 'king of Siam'. See AB, p.147.

¹³⁵ AB, p.147.

built the Bhomoraguri Ali and excavated the Bhatiapara tank.¹³⁶
 After his terrible experience of Mir Jumla's invasion he cleared the jungles of the old fortifications and temporary residence of king Hso-Dang-Hpa near the Patkai Hills, the south-eastern extremity of the kingdom proper, and widened the area constructing more houses and a new royal residence in it. He made it a powerful defence post with the fortifications mounted with large cannon and equipped with stores of other war materials before he came to see Garhgaon, the sight of which cut short his life.¹³⁷

Mir Jumla's invasion resulted in devastation of almost the whole valley of the Brahmaputra and for a brief period the Mughal General may be said to have held sway over the country except for the last stronghold of the Ahom king in the region of Mamrup Hills. But it was also realized by the Mughals that they could not have a permanent footing in this land.

Shihabuddin Talish's
 Account Of Assam :

Shihabuddin (poetically called Talish), who

136 K.T.P. : op.cit., pp.38-39 ; Gait : op.cit.,
 p.140.

137 K.T.P. : op.cit., p.39.

accompanied Mir Jumla to Assam as Waqiahnavis,¹³⁸ wrote an account of the country in Persian which reveals many such things about Assam in the seventeenth century A.D. as are not contained in the Buranjis. A few important extracts of the account only can be given here. The following extracts are as translated from Persian Mss. by Prof. J.N. Sarkar in the Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society, (vol. I, Part II, Dec., 1915, pp. 179-95). He points out that throughout his account Talish uses the word "Assamese" for the Ahoms only. Talish says :-

'Assam is a wild and dreadful country, abounding in danger. ...

'The length of Assam from west to east, Gauhati to Sadiya, is about 200 kos,¹³⁹ its breadth, north to south,

138 The office of Waqiahnavis, or writer of events, was introduced by Akbar. His duty was to report to Court whatever happened in the district to which he was appointed. (H. Blochmann - 'Koch Bihar and Asam' in JASB, I, 1872, p. 51). Talish's book is named Fathiyah-i-ibrivah (or ibratia) ("The victories that give warning") or T'arikh Fath-i-Asham ("History of the Conquest of Asam"). The author's name is known to be Ibn Muhammad Wali or Shihabuddin Talish who wrote the account of Assam between the 9th August, 1662 and the 13th May, 1663. An abstract of this work was published by Blochmann in the JASB, 1872, Part I, pp. 63-96. From a transcript of Bodleian Ms. 589. (Sachau and Ethe's Bodleian Catalogue, No. 240) Sir Jadunath Sarkar published a summary of the whole in the JASB, of 1906, pp. 257-267 and of 1907, pp. 405-425. A translation by him of the portion on Assam in the JBORS, (vol. I, Part II, Dec., 1915, pp. 179-95), is reproduced by Gait in his History of Assam, pp. 140-51. The description of Assam and its people fills 19 pages in Talish. There is also a translation of Talish's book into French, through the Urdu of Mir Bahadur 'Ali by Theodore Pavie (Paris, 1845). See also Rieu, British Museum catalogue, I, 266 (Additional Ms. 25.422).

139 1 Kos (or Kroska) = 2 English miles (about). Hence 200 Kos = 400 miles. Jogini Tantra says Kamarupa was triangular in shape, 100 Yojanas in length (from the Karatoya) and 30 Yojanas in breadth. 1 Yojana = 4 Kroskas = 8 English miles.

from the hills of the Garos, Miris, Mishmis, Daflas, and Landahs to those of the Naga tribe is seven or eight days journey at a guess. ... The land on the north bank of the Brahmaputra is called Uttarkol, and on the southern bank Dakhinkol. Uttarkol stretches from Gauhati to the home of the Miri and Mishmi tribe, and Dakhinkol from the kingdom of the Nak-kati Rani to the village of Sadiya. 'The Rajah of Assam brought to the field an army whose large number became a cage on earth ;

' (They were) tumult-raising and sudden (in attack) like the eyes of the fair sex ;

' Hurling arrows and (other) missiles, and making a (firm) stand in the battle-field.

' Their bodies full of life, they robbed lives on plain and hill.

' All of them were terrific like the demon I'frit (a giant in Persian mythology) in the river.

' If one of them made a charge on the battle-field,

' Their bodies would be severed from their heads, and their heads from their ^{bodies} (before they left it).

' They seem to be Ahrimans (The Satan or evil spirits in Zoroastrian mythology) come out of hell,

' They are strong-lived to such a degree that if they are turned into dust

' Their veins do not become the least slack.

' All of them are without light (Light = knowledge of the Muhammadan religion) like the eyeballs of the blind ; ...

'They resemble men in nothing beyond this that they walk erect on two feet in the lanes and bazars.

'They can practise tricks so well that they can,

'Confine the wind in the limbs like bubbles in water.

'The number of their population is larger than the Field of Resurrection can hold.

'Their kingdom extends from the farthest east to the farthest west.

'Its rivers are more numerous than the waves of a river.

'Calculation has been beggared by the large number of its forts.

'The forts are granite-based like the hearts of heroes.

'Although most of the inhabitants of the neighbouring hills pay no tax (daj) to the Rajah of Assam, yet they accept his sovereignty and obey some of his commands. The Dafla tribe alone does not place its feet in the skirts of obedience, but occasionally encroaches on his kingdom.

'From the village of Kaliabar to the city of Garhgaon houses and orchards full of fruit trees stretch in an unbroken line ; and both sides of the road, shady bamboo groves raise their heads to the sky. Many varieties of sweet-scented wild and garden flowers bloom here, and from the rear of the bamboo groves upto the foot of the hills there are cultivated fields and gardens. From Lakhaugrah to Garhgaon, also, there are roads houses and farms in the same style ; and a lofty and wide

embanked road has been constructed upto Garhgaon for traffic.

'In this country they make the surface of fields and gardens so level that the eye cannot find the least elevation in it up to the extreme horizon. Uttarkol has greater abundance of population and cultivation ; but as there are more inaccessible strongholds and defensible central places in Dakhinkol, the kings of Assam have fixed their abode in the latter.¹⁴⁰

'The people of his country are free from certain fatal and loathsome diseases - such as leprosy, white leprosy, elephantiasis, cutaneous eruptions, goitre and hydrocele, - which prevail in Bengal. They are also immune from many other lingering maladies.

'Gold is washed from the sand of the Brahmaputra. Ten to twelve thousand Assamese are engaged in this employment, and they pay to the Rajah's government one tola of gold per head per year. But this gold is of a low-standard of purity ; a tola of it fetches only eight or nine rupees. ... but the only people who know how to gather it are those Assamese. The currency of this kingdom consists of cowries and rupees and

¹⁴⁰ The description, as given here nullifies Talish's earlier statement that 'Assam is a wild and dreadful country, abounding in danger'. Certain outlying areas like Namrup might have been wild and dreadful, but the sweeping remark appears to be an exaggeration. In rain and flood Assam is not more dreadful or dangerous than Eastern Bengal (now East Pakistan). In point of diseases Assam was in many respects better and produced a vast manpower as is affirmed by Talish himself. Further Assam knew no regular famines unlike Bengal or Mughul India. Not being able to be acclimatized in this country in a single season is another matter.

gold coins stamped with the stamp of the Rajah. Copper coins are not current. ... Silver, copper and tin are also obtained in the hills of the same tribes (Miri and Mishmi). ... The aloe wood which grows in the hills of Namrup, Sadiya and Lakhaugarh,¹⁴¹ is heavy, coloured and scented.

'If this country were administered like the Imperial dominions, it is very likely that forty to forty-five lakhs of rupees would be collected from the revenue paid by the raiyats, the price of elephants caught in the jungles and other sources. It is not the custom here to take any land tax (kharaj) from the cultivators ; but in every house one man out of three has to render service to the Raja, and if there is any delay in doing what he orders, no other punishment than death is inflicted.

'In all the past ages no (foreign) king could lay the hand of conquest on the skirt of this country, and no foreigner could treat it with the foot of invasion. Narrow are the gates by which outsiders can enter or issue from this country, and lame are the feet on which its natives can go to other countries. Their kings neither allow foreigners to enter their land, nor permit any of their own subjects to go out of it.¹⁴²

141 It is 27 miles due east of Visvanath on the north bank near the western point of the big island of Majuli.

142 Envoys, ambassadors and traders were certainly permitted to go abroad to visit the important cities and capitals of Mughul India, such as Delhi, Dacca, Gaur, Katak, Puri etc. both on official duties and in connection with trade and commerce and pilgrimages. Such other places as Kashi, Patna, Vrindavan and ~~other~~ were also visited. Most probably even spies, too, were sent abroad to collect informations about other countries. All these different categories of travellers and visitors brought in- formations about political developments in Mughul India from before Mir Jumla's invasion on the basis of which books like Padshah Duranji, Bhagawat, Ramayan, Mahabharata were written.

Formerly once a year, by order of the Rajah, a party used to go for trade to their frontier near Gauhati ; they have gold, musk, aloe wood, pepper, spikenard and silk cloth in exchange for salt, saltpetre, sulphur and certain other products of India which the people of Gauhati used to take thithir. In short, every army that entered this country made its exit from the realm of life ; ... In former times whenever an army turned towards this country for raid and conquest, as soon as it reached the frontier, the wretches made night attacks on it. If success did not dawn on the night of their enterprise, they used to drive away to the hills the peasantry along the route (of invasion), leaving not a man to inhabit a house or kindle a fire in that tract. The invaders neglecting caution and watchfulness, reached the centre of the country after passing unobstructed roads full of danger, raging torrents and frightful valleys covered with deadly forests. And by reason of the (traversed), distance, the winter expired on the way and the rainy season began. The wretches, descending from the hill tops like a flood, invested the army on all sides. ... So, that imprudent army, on being besieged has no power left to confront and repel the enemy, and grows weaker through failure to procure supplies of food, and is soon exterminated or taken prisoner.¹⁴³

143 This shows how the Ahoms shaped their war strategy against external enemies utilizing to the full the topographical advantages of the country and drilling the people in the art of quick mobility. This further indicates how the Hills people gave their unstinted support to the Ahom king, particularly against the Muslim invaders. The Hills and the Hills peoples' friendship constituted the main safeguard of Assam's independence in the last resort.

'And as no one who entered this country ever returned, and the manners of its natives were never made known to any outsiders, the people of Hindustan used to call the inhabitants of Assam sorcerers and magicians and consider them as standing outside human species. They say that whoever enters this country is overcome by charms and never comes out of it.

'The Rajahs of this country have always been self-confident and proud by reason of the large number of their followers and attendants and the abundance of their property, treasure and armed force ; and they have always maintained vast bodies of fighting men and mountain-like ferocious-looking elephants. Although ^(Jayadhvaj Singha) he is attached to the Hindu religion, ... he does not bow his head down in worship to any idol.

'And all the people of this country, not placing their necks in the yoke of any faith, eat whatever they get from the hand of any man, regardless of his caste, and undertake every kind of labour that appears proper to their defective sight. They do not abstain from eating food cooked by Muslims and non-Muslims, and partake of every kind of meat, whether of dead or of slaughtered animals, except human flesh. ... Their language differs entirely from that of all the people of Eastern India. Strength and heroism are apparent in the peoples of this country ; they are able to undertake hard tasks ; all of them are warlike and bloodthirsty, fearless in slaying and being slain, unrivalled in cruelty, treachery and rudeness,

unique in the world in deception, lying and breach of faith. The persons of their women are marked by beauty and delicacy of features, blackness and length of hair, softness of body, fairness of complexion and loveliness of hands and feet. From a distance their general appearance looks perfectly beautiful, but disfigured by the absence of proportion in the limbs. ... The wives of the Rajahs and peasants alike never veil their faces before anybody, and they move about in the market-places with bare heads. Few of the men have two wives only; most have four or five, and they mutually exchange their wives, or buy and sell them. ... They shave their hair, beard and moustaches. If any of their natives acts contrary to this practice in the least particular, they say that he has adopted the manners of the Bengalis¹⁴⁴ and they cut his head off.

'They (the Assamese) are greatly frightened by horses, and if they catch one, they hamstring it. If a single trooper charges a hundred well-armed Assamese, they all throw their arms down and run away, and if they cannot flee, they put their hands up to be chained as prisoners. But if one of them encounters ten Mughalman infantrymen, he fearlessly tries to slay them ~~xxxx~~ and succeeds in defeating them. The Assamese consider the sale of an elephant as the most disgraceful of act., and never commit it.

144 Here 'Bengalis' or more properly 'Bengals' mean the Muslims whom no Assamese was allowed to imitate. By putting 'Bengali' for 'Bengal' meaning any foreigner Sir Jadunath restricts the sense of the term. Even Europeans were called 'Baga Bangals'.

'They build war boats like the kosahs of Bengal, and call them bacharis. There is no other difference between the two than this that the prow and stern of the kosah have two (projecting) horns, while the head and base of the bachari consist of only one levelled plank ; and as, aiming solely at strength, they build these boats with the pith of timber (qalb-dar), they are slower than kosahs. So numerous are the boats, large and small, in this country that on one occasion the news-writer of Gauhati reported in the month of Ramzan that up to date of his writing 32,000 bachari and kosah boats had reached that place or passed it. The number of boats that conveyed the Imperial army and those inhabitants of Assam who accompanied the Nawab (Mir Jumla) in his return, probably exceeded the number mentioned by the news-writer. It is most probable that one-half of this number, or rather more than that, was owned by the wretches (i.e. the Assamese). They build most of their boats of chambal wood ; and such vessels, however heavily they may be loaded, on being swamped do not sink in the water. Many nobles (of our army) repeatedly witnessed this fact ; and the author has also had experience of it.

'They cast excellent matchlocks and bachadar artillery, and show a great skill in this craft. They make first-rate gunpowder, of which they procure the materials from the Imperial dominions. In the whole of Assam there is no building of brick, stone or mud, with the exception of the gates of Garhgaon and a few temples. Rich and poor alike construct

their houses with wood, bamboo and straw. The original inhabitants of this country are of two races, - the Assamese (i.e. the Ahoms) and the Kolita. In all things the latter are superior to the former ; but in performing difficult tasks and making a firm stand in battle, the opposite is the case.

'Six or seven thousand Assamese always stand guard round the abode and bedroom of the Raja, and these are called Cheudangs. They are the devoted and trusted servants of the Raja and are his executioners. The weapons of war of the people of this country are matchlocks, Rax-changis,¹⁴⁵ cannon, arrows with and without iron heads, half-swords, spears, bamboo bows and cross-bow (takhsh) arrows. In times of war, all the inhabitants of the kingdom, - artizans, farmers, the well-to-do and common people, free and unfree - have to go to battle, whether they wish it or not ; like jackals they set up a concerted howl, all at the same time and deliver a great assault.... A very small number of their soldiers often checkmate thousands in battle. But those of their warriors and heroes who attack the enemy with sword and arrow and boldly pierce the enemy's ranks, belong to the race of genuine Assamese,¹⁴⁶ and these probably do not number more than 20,000 men. They mostly engage in battles and night attacks in the night of Tuesday, which they consider an auspicious time. The common people either

145 'Some sort of light field-piece' (Irvine's Army of Indian Myghals, p.137).

146 'genuine Assamese' = 'acal Asamese' of Blochmann.- JASB, 1872, p.82.

fight and are defeated, or flee without fighting. Fixing in their minds eye the purport of (the holy verse), "Those who had fear gained safety, while fearless were destroyed", they throw away all their arms and escape.

'The common people bury their dead with some of the property of the deceased, placing the head towards the east and the feet towards the west. The chiefs build vaults for their dead, and place therein the wives and servants of the deceased, after killing them, together with necessary articles for a few years, including various kinds of gold and silver vessels, carpets, clothes, and food-stuffs. ... From the ten vaults which were dug opened (by the Mughals) nearly ninety thousand rupees on all accounts were realised. ...

'As for the Musalmans who had been taken prisoner in former times ~~who had been taken prisoner in former times~~ and had chosen to marry (here), their descendants act exactly in the manner of the Assamese, and have nothing of Islam except the name ; their hearts are inclined far more towards mingling with the Assamese than towards association with Muslims. The Muhammadans who had come here from Islamic lands engaged in the performance of prayer and fasting, but were forbidden to chant the call to prayer or publicly recite the 'Words of God' (i.e. the Muhammadan confession of faith).

'The city of Garhgaon has four gates of stone set in mud from each of which to the Rajah's palace for a distance of three kos an extremely strong, high and wide embankment (al) has been ~~for~~ constructed for the passage of men. Around

the city, in the place of a wall, there is an encompassing bamboo plantation running continuously ; the bamboo-grove is about two kog, more or less across. But in the city the habitations are not regularly laid out. The houses of the inhabitants have been built in a scattered fashion within the bamboo-grove, close to the al, and every man's orchard and plough-land are situated ⁺in front of his house, one end of the field touching the al and the other the house. Near the Rajah's place on both banks of the Dikhau river the houses are numerous, and there is a narrow bazar-road. The only traders who sit in ^{are} the bazar/betel-leaf sellers. It is not their practice to buy and sell articles of food in the market-place. The inhabitants of the country store in their houses one year's supply of food of all kinds ; and (therefore) are under no necessity to buy or sell any eatable.

'In short, the city of Garhgaon appeared to us to be circular (mahuta), wide, and composed of some villages. Round the Rajah's house a (second) al has been run, and above it strong bamboos have been planted close together, to serve for a wall. Round it a moat has been dug, which is deeper than a man's height in most places, and is always full of water. This enclosure is one kog and 14 chains in circumference. Inside it high and spacious thatched houses have been built. The Rajah's audience hall, -- called Solang, ... is 120 cubits long and 30 cubits broad, measured on the inside. It stands on 66 pillars, each of them about four cubits round. They have

smoothed such huge pillars so well that at first sight they seemed to have been turned on a lathe. Though the people of Assam pretended to have (knowledge of) the art of turning on lathes, yet reason refuses to believe it. My pen fails to describe in detail the other arts and rare inventions employed in decorating the woodwork of this palace. Probably nowhere else in the whole world can wooden houses be built with such decoration and figure-carving as by the people of this country. The sides of this palace have been partitioned into wooden lattices of various designs carved in relief, and adorned, both within and outside, with mirrors of brass, polished so finely that when the sunbeams fall on them, the eye is dazzled by the flashing back of light. This mansion was completed by 12,000 men working for one year. At one end of this palace, on four pillars facing each other, rings have been fixed, nine rings on each pillar. Whenever the Rajah wished to live in this house, a throne was placed between the four pillars, and nine canopies, each of a different stuff, were fastened to the rings above the throne. The Rajah sat on the throne under the canopies; the drummers beat their drums and dands. The dand is a circular flat instrument of brass like our gongs (gharial) which (our) gong-men play upon. When the Rajah holds court or rides out, or the nobles (phukans) set out for the places to which they have been newly appointed, the drums and dands are beaten. That perfect (scholar) Mulla Darvish of Herat, who had explored the Persian tongue more than the Arabic language, used

to say that the tag-ruin (brazen gongs) mentioned in Shahnamah signified this very dand. Verily God knows the truth.

'As for the many other wooden mansions, ... carved, decorated, strong, long and broad, ... which were inside the enclosure (of the palace), their elegance and peculiar features were fit to be seen and not heard of. But may not (even) an infidel have the lot of beholding those houses, unless this country is annexed to the Imperial dominions, so that he might not be involved in the calamities that overwhelmed us.

'Outside the enclosure of the palace, a perfectly neat and pure mansion has been built for the residence of the Rajah ; and the nobles have built very fine and strong houses near the royal palace. The Bar Phukan, who was the Rajah's son-in-law,¹⁴⁷ had laid out an extremely elegant and fresh garden round a very pure and sweet tank within the grounds of his mansion. Truly it was a pleasant spot and a heart-ravishing and pure elode. Owing to the excess of damp, it is not the custom in this country to make the courtyard of houses on the surface of the ground ; but they built their houses on platforms resting on (wooden) pillars.'

Shihabuddin Talish's account, barring a few caustic remarks against his enemies, the Ahoms, and exaggerations here and there, is confirmed by the Buranjis of Assam in so far as such accounts of the period are contained in them. It would

147 It is a mistake, for it was the Bar-Phukan who was the father-in-law of the king and not the Bar-Phukan the king's son-in-law. See K.T.P. : op.cit., p.38 ; AB - 'SMJC', p.87 ; Assam Buranji (1648-1681 A.D.), p.5.

ever remain a classic document furnishing an authentic piece of history of Assam in the seventeenth century of the Christian Era. It presents the picture of a country in which the rivers and hills, jungles and seasonal floods and the support and allegiance of the hardy hill tribes gave additional strength to the defence organization of the country and the vigour of the race. The Ahoms conceived the defence plan according to the geographical condition of the land. Unlike their forefathers, who depended chiefly on the cavalry for offence and defence in Mun-nan, the Ahoms, in the conditions of the Brahmaputra valley, shifted the emphasis to the navy and forts, and the elephant was found more useful than the horse as a war animal for the army. Talish highly speaks of the physical superiority and bravery of the Ahoms, their hardiness and enterprising spirit. 'A still stronger proof of Ahom valour', says Professor J.N. Sarker, 'is the abuse he (Talish) applies to them (the Ahoms)'. Talish was also charmed to see the decorations and wood-carvings of the Ahoms as represented on the palace buildings and on the beautiful houses of the Ahom nobles. That Hinduism had little influence in changing the habits and customs of the race is evident from the fact that untouchability was completely absent ~~among them~~ and the observance of the rules of caste and restriction of food and drink according to the Hindu system was nowhere to be seen among them. The Ahoms were still a 'hardy, meat-eating, bear-drinking, fighting race'.¹⁴⁸

148 From a letter by Col. Dalton. Vide Ethnology of Bengal, last group.

21. Koo-Tong-Lung alias Chakradhvaj Singha (1663-1669) :

After Jayadvaj Singha's death in November (Kartik, 25), 1663, the ministers and other officers held a council in the month of Ashvayana (November-December) and, as desired by the deceased king, who had no son, sent Katakia to call in the Shairing Raja, son of Jayadvaj Singha's uncle,¹⁴⁹ to succeed to the throne. The Shairing Raja was also the grandson of Koo-Lung,¹⁵⁰ a former Shairing Raja called Deo Raja. One Duranji says that Jayadvaj had two sons,¹⁵¹ none of whom was chosen as his successor, but this appears to be a mistake in the context of the succession question. Other Duranjis definitely assert that he had no son. When Jayadvaj Singha fell ill at Saktha and proposed the name of the Shairing Raja as his successor, Raja-Sagur opposed the selection and, after consultation with his two queens,¹⁵² tried to influence the king to nominate his adopted son, Laisong. Laisong was the son of the Parbatia queen¹⁵³ by her former husband. But the king dared not accept the suggestion against the wishes of his ministers and nobles of the Court. Raja-Sagur's opposition to Shairing Raja's (Chakradhvaj Singha's) succession had far-reaching consequences with the tragic end of himself and his associates.

149 PAB, p.150 ; Karnamur Duranji, p.85.

150 AD, p.136 ; E.T.P. : op.cit., p.40.

151 E.T.P., p.40.

152 both being the daughters of Raja-Sagur, Naboicha Thukan. 153 Elder sister of the chief queen and former wife of the Tukhuriparia Rura-Gohain, Doali.

The ministers (Dangarias) and other nobles installed the Shairing Raja as king at Bakatha with the necessary ceremonies. He, however, formally ascended the Haw-long at Leshang with the Chumdeo tied round his neck in the month of Dinruk (Baisakh, April-May, 1664) and underwent the coronation ceremony assuming the title of Hso-Pong-Mong as conferred on him by the Deodhai Pundits. His Hindu name is Chakradhvaj Singha. One Buranji says that he ascended the Singari-Ghar in the town made in the area of the munition go-down near the Salakhamara ghat on the south bank of the river Pesang¹⁵⁴ where he held his Court. He also built a treasury (Gola-Ghar) in this town and collected in it rupees seven lakhs for paying war-indemnity to the Mughuls. Since that time the Gola-Ghar became a permanent institution of the State which was always kept well-guarded. (Kashinath Buranji, p.40).

Realization Of War-Indemnity (1663-1667) :
Increasing Tension In Mughul-Ahom Relations :

Soon after his accession Chakradhvaj Singha was faced with the problem of vassalage as well as the war-indemnity and tributes to be paid to the Mughuls under the Treaty of Ghilajhari Ghat. A group of four Muslim envoys named Dur Beg, Rastum Beg, Taja Khan and Shaykh Kamal arrived at Lakhau with presents from the Emperor for Jayadvhaj Singha. Of these the first two ahadis¹⁵⁵ came from the Court of Aurangzeb at Delhi and on their

154 K.T.P. : op.cit., p.40. Pesang must be Leshang. See AB, p.193.

155 ahadi is a Persian word meaning 'one man', and hence two ahadis or two men.

way they met the party with the Ahom Princess Nang-Seng at Patna and Dilir Khan sent back with them Banhbaria Bhabananda Kataki and Gadai, who were accompanying the Princess to Delhi. On their arrival at Gauhati the Faujdar, Rashid Khan, sent with them Taja Khan and Shaykh Kamal in their onward journey to the Ahom Court.¹⁵⁶ When Chakradhvaj Singha was informed of the arrival of the Muslim envoys at Lakhau he sent two Katakis, Madhavcharan and Garia, to inform them of the death of Hso-Tam-La (Jayadvaj Singha) and of his brother's accession to the throne of Assam and hence wishing them (Muslim envoys) to go back.¹⁵⁷ Rastum Beg then returned to Gauhati and met Rashid Khan at Tamulihat. He gave the Faujdar the information of Jayadvaj Singha's death and sought his advice as to the disposal of the imperial presents sent for the deceased king. The Faujdar said : 'The king's brother has now become king ; what difference is there ? Give the presents to that (new) king'. Rastum Beg then proceeded back to Lakhau. In the meantime, Banhbaria Bhabananda and Gadai had arrived at Bakatha and reported to the king that the Padshah had sent for him Sirpao¹⁵⁸ and other presents with two Wakils, Dur Beg and Rastum Beg. Having heard the report the king exclaimed : 'My father, grand-father and forefathers did never put on Bangal

¹⁵⁶ AB, p.186 ; PAB, p.130 ; Kamrupar Buranji, p.85.

¹⁵⁷ AB, p.186.

¹⁵⁸ Sirpao is a dress of honour. Sirpao is from Persian Saropa meaning 'head and foot', and Sarapa - head to foot. Harekanta Barua's explanation that Sirpao was a turban bearing the foot-print of the Emperor signifying vassalage which had to be put on or be prepared for war is wrong and absurd, for there was no such custom in the Mughul Court. See his book Assam Buranji, p.48. Chakradhvaj was against wearing a foreign dress however honourable. But as a present from the Padshah it was expected to be put on.

Padshah's dress. Now that I have to put it on is worse than death !' The envoys then came up to Kujibali and sent a message to the king stating the object of their visit. They were permitted to come to the Court at Leshang and were presented with 400 gold Rajmohars in a silver sarai at the steps of the Court building. They were then led into the royal presence. Instead of falling prostrate at the feet of the king, as was the usual etiquette of the Court, the two imperial ahadis simply saluted the king with a taslim¹⁵⁹ and made over the presents, which were then arranged in a golden sarai and placed before the Svargadev by the Rajmantri. One account (Assam Buranjis: 1648-1681 A.D., p.25) says that the imperial ahadis desired to see the king wear the Sirpao with due respect. But as the king was opposed to the suggestion the ministers and officers of the Court advised the king to pretend illness and be at rest behind a screen. In the meantime the ahadis were bribed not to press their point and they agreed. Then leaving Rashid Khan's men outside the screen the imperial ahadis with the presents were led to the presence of the king to whom the presents were offered. From there the Sirpao was sent to the royal store.

159 distorted into Tasmil in the Assamese Durajjis. There were three forms of salutation in the Mughul Court and they were called Salam, Taslim and Kurnish. "Taslim consists in placing the back of the right hand on the ground, and then raising it gently till the person stands erect, when he puts the palm of his hand upon the crown of his head, which pleasing manner of saluting signifies that he is ready to give himself up as an offering". As quoted by H.I. Borah in his Notes to Baharistan-i-Chaybi, II, p. 828. In Kurnish "the palm of the right hand to be placed upon the forehead, and the head to be bent downwards". This mode of salutation signifies placing the head "into the hand of humility, giving it to the royal assembly as a present". See Ain, I, 158. It was later abolished.

It is of importance to know that under the treaty the Mughuls were to withdraw from the territory of Assam but they still retained the right to hold that part of it which lay to the west of the Bharali and the Kallang as part of the old Koch country in spite of the original Mughul demand for releasing the territories to the west of the Bar Nadi and the Asurar Ali. Now, as it is, Kajali on the south bank and Banhbari on the north bank remained the easternmost posts of the Mughuls until 1667 when they were seized by the Ahoms. Though the agreed war-indemnity could not be paid in one year's time for obvious reasons, it was, almost paid up by May, 1666, only a small amount remaining, and for its full discharge honest endeavours were made all through by the Ahom authorities though the Mughul officers, particularly Faujdar Firoz Khan, wounded their feelings by making repeatedly harsh demands. The Emperor and Dilir Khan alone corresponded with the Ahom king and his ministers in very friendly terms and presents were exchanged between them. The Mughul Government also dealt in an ungenerous and grasping way, as rightly noted by sir Jadunath Sarkar, with the Ahom king in money matters. Whenever any of the elephants forming part of the indemnity died on the way to the Court after having been delivered to the Mughul agent, the Assam Government had to bear the loss and pay Rs. 2,000 for it thus increasing the burden of the already huge indemnity. Further the Mughuls also did not restore the captive subjects of Assam though the Ahom king released the Mughul prisoners. King Chakradhwaj Singha remarked that the Princess, 3 lakhs

rupees and 90 elephants were offered to the Muslims for the welfare of the country and for giving back the Assamese captives that the Muslims had taken, but the latter had not as yet returned the captives, nor had they restored, as expected, the former boundary of the kingdom. Even from Alangirnaman (p. 1068) it is clear that Darrang was never occupied by the Muslims. The king wrote a letter to that effect and sent Chandra Kandali and Sanatan with the imperial ahadis with the letter and presents of one hundred musks, forty ordinary knives, four knives with gold handles, twenty seers of aloes wood and nine tusked elephants for the Emperor. He also gave some presents of gold and silver to the imperial ahadis and Rashid Khan's two men.

After a few days of the departure of the imperial ahadis the Faujdar Rashid Khan sent Shaykh Kamal to Chakradhvaj Singha for realizing the remaining portion of the tributes of money and elephants. The Shaykh 'arrived in Mungdunshunkhan (Assam)' and was escorted 'to the Darbar'. The Muslim envoy was asked by the escorts to follow the proper Court etiquette and fall prostrate at the feet of the Svargadev. But when he reached the city-gate he expressed his inability to fall prostrate and pointed out that when he last came with the imperial ahadis he merely saluted the king with a Taslim and he would now do the same. The heavenly king, being informed of

the matter, said, "the Padshah's men, Dur Beg and Rastum Beg saluted me without falling prostrate at my feet as they had come in obedience to the order of the Emperor. But this man is simply a Nawab's Kataki, so there is no ground that he should not bow down his head at my feet".¹⁶⁰ With this, the king ordered his men to take him back to his camp. Shaykh Kamal, seeing that the king was enraged, expressed his willingness to greet the king by falling prostrate at his feet. Accordingly the Shaykh was produced before the king who had then a talk with him and dismissed him with presents. Two Katakis, Madhav Charan and Garia, were sent with the Muslim envoy.

Chandra Kandali and Sanatan met the Delhi Emperor and intimated the grievances of the Ahom king. The Emperor replied to the latter through his envoys assuring restoration of any part of the Ahom territory if the Mughal army had encroached upon it beyond the limits of the Koch territory. He also said that orders would be issued to repatriate if any persons had been seized and brought away as captives.¹⁶¹ The Emperor also directed the Katakis to meet Shaista Khan on their way back to Assam. Nawab Shaista Khan, the Amir-al-Omrah, who became the Subahdar of Bengal after the death of

¹⁶⁰ AB, p.187.

¹⁶¹ AB, p.191 ; Kamrupar Buranji, p.30 ; PAB, p.131.

Mir Jumla,¹⁶² sent with the Katakis his envoy Panditrai with a letter to the Bura-Gohain demanding the balance of the war indemnity which had not been paid for the last one year and a half nor any reply given by the Ahom Court since his (Shaista Khan's) assumption of office. As a reply to the letter brought by Panditrai the three Gohains of the king's Court wrote to Rashid Khan explaining the position in polite terms and communicating their endeavours to pay up the balance. Dilir Khan also wrote to the Bar-Phukan pressing for early implementation of the treaty terms by clearing the arrears of the indemnity, to which the latter replied by a letter, dated 8th Falgun (Feb., 1664), that already 'in the month of Kartik (October-November, 1663) rupees one lakh had been sent in the hand of Gadai to Rashid Khan's place and now also sent herewith a sum of rupees forty-four thousand and forty-four elephants with this person and whatever amount of rupees and elephants remain to be delivered are being searched for from various sources. We are not able to make ~~xx~~ ready. When ~~xx~~ will be ready we shall send ~~them~~, and the delay that has happened is owing to the whole country being laid waste. If we can pay then only our burden is relieved'.¹⁶³

Now at Gauhati Nawab Sayyid Firoz Khan succeeded Rashid Khan in 1666 as the Thanadar of Gauhati and Faujdar of Kamrup.

¹⁶² Shaista Khan was the nephew of empress Nur Jahan but as he had not then recovered from the wounds he had received at Poona from the assassins of Sivaji he was permitted to govern the province by his deputy Daud Khan until he was fit to run the office himself.

¹⁶³ Bar-Phukan's letter to Dilir Khan. Kamrupar Buranji, pp. 88-89. ~~The rupees of one lakh rupees were sent in the month of Kartik~~

Piroz Khan, on the assumption of his office, sent Sayyid Jafar Khan to the Ahom Court with a letter demanding in a haughty and imperious tone the arrears under the stipulation to deliver rupees three lakhs and ninety elephants. Hearing the contents of the letter king Chakradhvaj became furiously indignant and exclaimed : 'Better death than be under the Bangals : 164

Chakradhvaj Singha's War Preparations :

He dismissed Jafar Khan from his presence but detained him at the capital. Determined to make war on the Mughuls he held a council of his nobles and officers. He pointed out to them : 'We have delivered to the Bangals elephants and money, only a small portion remains to be given. 165 How long can we tolerate their insolence ? I want to invade Gauhati. What

164 PAB, p.153 ; Kamrupar Duranji, p.91.

165 Barring the amount of 20,000 tolas of gold and 1,20,000 rupees there were repeated demands for clearing 3 lakhs rupees and 90 elephants. They were delivered as follows and by the middle of 1666 only a small part, about 20,000 rupees and 30 elephants were overdue. The following table is prepared from the accounts given in AB - 'SMJC', pp.105-6 and Kamrupar Duranji, pp.68-69 :-

Time of delivery.	Christian year.	By whom delivered.	To whom delivered.	Place of delivery.	Elephants.	Money (Precious metals).
Kartik, Sak 1585	A.D. 1663	Chandrai, Kamal, Gajala and Garia.	Khan Khana (Mir Jumla)	Tipam		gold 20,000 tolas. Silver 1,20,000 rupees.
Arrahayan, sak 1585	A.D. 1663	Lakhtakia Barua, Lao Deka, Sarkar and Bara and Chatur- binuj Kataki.	Dur Beg	Leshang.		Silver 1,00,000 rupees.
Chaitra, sak 1585	A.D. 1663	Gadai Pathakchandra,		Hokuri-khowa.	30	40,000 rupees.
Kartik, sak 1586	A.D. 1664	Chaturbhuj Kakati, Kalis Kataki and Dhekial Bazarika.				

(continued on the next page).

do you say ?' Banhgarhia Bura-Gohain, Banrukia Bar-Gohain, Baghchoal Barpatra-Gohain, the Bar-Barua and the Phukens discussed the question and, though they first hesitated yet noticing the king's firmness and self-confidence, all said - 'Svargadev's grand-father and forefathers were never subject to the Bangals. Yet by an adverse turn of the times it has happened. Now if Your Majesty be pleased to command we are ready to invade Gauhati.¹⁶⁶

In the month of Chaitra (March-April), 1667, a screech-owl perched on the top of the king's Haw-long (royal Court) at Leshang. The king therefore left the Haw-long unrepaired and built one at Garhgeon and shifted his residence and Court to this former permanent capital.¹⁶⁷

The king then proceeded to take stock of the war potential of the country. Once when this matter was being discussed in his Council he enquired of the Tam Daloi, Joyananda, who was the officer in charge of the State arsenal, about the

Continued from the last page :-

<u>Falgun,</u> <u>sak 1585</u>	A.D. 1664	Kukurachua Banhbaria Kataki, Kaupatia Kataki and Kanai Kataki.	40,000 rupees.
<u>Arrahayan,</u> <u>sak 1586</u>	A.D. 1664		40
<u>Bhadra,</u> <u>sak 1587</u>	A.D. 1665		10,000 rupees, (5 died) (for 5 elephants)
<u>Jalstha,</u> <u>sak 1588</u>	A.D. 1666	Miroz Khan	50 in 1,00,000 licu of rupees.

¹⁶⁶ Assam Buranji (1648-1681 A.D.), p. 27.

¹⁶⁷ AB, p. 193 ; Assam Buranji (1648-1681 A.D.), p. 26.

arms and ammunitions in the stock. The Dalai replied that there was a large stock of them in the store. But after the Council meeting when the king retired inside his residence he met him in private and reported that actually there was not a single box of gun-powder in the stock, of bullets there were not even four full boxes and of arrows there was not a single bundle.

'As Your Majesty asked about it in the Council', said he, 'I replied as I did lest the true statement might discourage many and also reach the ears of the enemy'.¹⁶³ The king appreciated it and took immediate steps to collect materials for the production of arms and ammunitions. Ware-houses for arms, such as those for arrows (kand-ghar), gun-powder (khar-ghar) and other weapons, were constructed within the enclosure of the capital at Garhgaon. In order that the king might personally supervise the works huge smithy workshops were set up just in front of the main gate (baraduar) of the Palace compound for the manufacture of all kinds of heavy arms, such as guns and cannon. To speed up production of war-boats the king offered presents and all kinds of facilities to the Naoshaliya Barua (Superintendent of the boat-building yard) to serve as incentives to work. The king personally attended the parade grounds and military training centres and ordered and watched demonstrations of archery and gun-firing by the trainees. Whenever any body was found not properly trained in archery, for instance, the king would call him to his side and show him the way of holding the bow and shooting the arrows. He thus inspired the great masses of troops and recruits under

¹⁶³ PAB, p.134.

training by his personal association with them. He supplied them with free rations of rice, fish, salt and milk and also gave them clothes and money.¹⁶⁹ One Buranji¹⁷⁰ refers to a reform he made in the command of the army with a view to secure greater efficiency. Each battalion of 1,000 ~~men~~ ^{men} under a Hazarika was split up into two battalions of 500, each officered by a Hazarika. This arrangement, if it was at all made, appears to be temporary, for there is no reference to it in later periods. In short, Chakradhvaj Singha was so determined that he was not satisfied with anything less than to organize a vast war effort with all possible thoroughness under his personal supervision and care with the definite object of dealing a knock-out blow on the Mughuls and drive them out of the occupied territory.

In the meantime there were exchanges of letters between Prannarayan, the Raja of Koch Behar, and Chakradhvaj Singha for an alliance between them against the common enemy, the Mughuls. The alliance was formed and Chakradhvaj Singha wrote finally in August, 1667, to Prannarayan - 'Hence I attack the Mughuls who are at Gauhati and let our allied Raja (Prannarayan) attack those on his borders'. (Kamrupar Buranji, p.84). Friendship and goodwill were strengthened with the Kachari and Jayanta Rajas, and a number of border tribes, such as the Nagas of Banchang and the Miris and Deories of the north bank, who disturbed the peace of the neighbouring areas, were subdued. A series of forts were constructed on strategic points along the Brahmaputra to support the advance of the Ahom expeditionary forces into Kamrup.

¹⁶⁹ PAB, pp.154-35.

¹⁷⁰ AB - 'SMJG', p.109.

Further, in order to test the strength of the people the king ordered a road (ali) to be built from Teliadonga to Janji. He also excavated a tank at Khokora, probably the present Khona Khokora not far from Janji. He invited four Mahantas and performed a vajna and gave them presents for officiating at it. He thus secured the co-operation and blessings of all sections of the population in the country before launching his intended attack on the Mughul imperialists.

When the preparations for war were nearly complete early in 1667 the king, who thought that Jayadhvaj Singha's defeat was no less due to his neglect of his ancestral worship than to other causes. This neglect or rather inhibition was definitely in consequence of Jayadhvaj being a proselyte of a Hindu priest. In the month of Shravan of that year Chakradhvaj Singha held a council of his three Gohains and other officers. Addressing them, the king said, - 'my brother, Chao-Hpa Hso-Tam-La, did not make any offering to our forefathers. He also did not offer sacrifices to Lengdon and all other gods. So the Musalmans could come to our country and devastate the province. The archers and artisans were massacred and all people suffered great misery. Now, I wish to propitiate Lengdon and other gods by offering sacrifices and to make offerings to the forefathers. The people, at large, should be collected and offerings should be made. I wish to free myself from the subjugation of the Musalmans. I think, I shall be successful in the attempt. I wish to know your opinion'. The Bar-Gohain said in reply, 'In the ancient time, your forefathers used to do the same

thing when they were overtaken by any such misfortune. They, thus, regained their former powers'. Your proposal is really praiseworthy'. The king with the Gohains proceeded to Charaideo and performed the rites. The Deka Phukan, son of Guimela Bar-Gohain and Bhelai Phukan of Landaomi family also worshipped the gods of Charaideo and made offer of sacrifices. The king asked the Deodhai Pandits to examine the legs of fowls. The Pandits examined them and found the calculation favourable to the king. The king now felt assured of success and came to Garhgaon. He collected his men and gave them necessary instructions.

The king's chief concern was to find out a capable and trustworthy general to be appointed as Bar-Phukan or Viceroy of Lower Assam to deal effectively with the Mughals. His choice fell on Lachit, a young and enterprising officer and a younger son of Momai Tamuli Bar-Barua,¹⁷¹ whom he appointed to this very responsible office. Prior to his appointment to the office of Bar-Phukan he, popularly called Lachit Deka, held successively the posts of Ghora-Barua,¹⁷² Dulia Barua,¹⁷³ Simaluguria Phukan¹⁷⁴ and Dolakakharua Barua¹⁷⁵ and he also served as an army officer and fought against Mir Jumla's forces 'at the side of the river Tilao (Lohit)'.¹⁷⁶ The son of Ao Gohain,

¹⁷¹ K.T.P. : op.cit., p.40 ; Assam Buranji (1648-1681 A.D.), p.26, AB, p.196, AB - 'SMJC', p.109.

¹⁷² Superintendent of the royal horses.

¹⁷³ Superintendent of the dola or palanquin-bearers of the king and nobles. He was also in charge of the king's palanquins.

¹⁷⁴ Phukan or Commandant in charge of Simaluguria near Garhgaon, the capital.

¹⁷⁵ or Dolakharua Barua, that is, Commandant of the armed guards accompanying the king close to the palanquin during his journey.

¹⁷⁶ AB, pp.1'o, 181.

Shairingia Pelen called Ghora Konwar, who was the Bar-Phukan at Kaliabar before Lachit, was appointed Bar-Barua by removing Bengkhowa from that office.¹⁷⁷ The king also revived the post of Salal Gohain, which had remained defunct since the time of Leshaidang Salal Gohain under Hoo-Kham-Hpa or Khora Raja (1553-1603), and appointed Kachalukhwa of the Parbatia Bar-Gohain family to that post.¹⁷⁸ Raja-Sasur Naoboicha Phukan, who opposed the nomination of Chakradhvaj Singha to the throne, was later executed with his associates at Baghm Haphalu. The complainants against him were Sanatan Kataki, Ganak Barua, Rama Bannun and Momai Tamuli's son Laluk Dolakakharia Barua. Laluk became Naoboicha Phukan after the extermination of Raja-Sasur's family. The two queens of Jayadvaj Singha with the adopted son also suffered the same fate for conspiring with their father Raja-Sasur against ^{Chakradhvaj} ~~him~~ Buhgarhia Atan Bura-Gohain was appointed Rajmantri.

Chakradhvaj Singha Attacked The Mughuls And Recovered Kamrup (August-November, 1667) :

With the above changes and new appointments made and the war preparations completed Chakradhvaj ordered a disposition of his forces and generals for commencing attacks on the Mughuls. Marangikhwa Gohain was stationed near the Kachari territory. The Barpatra-Gohain¹⁷⁹ was placed at Kaliabar. Langi-song Bar-Gohain and Sadiyakhwa Gohain were sent to repair the

177 K.T.P. : op.cit., pp.40-41 ; Assam Buranji (1648-1681), p.26.

178 K.T.P. : op.cit., p.41.

179 Langi and Latao successively. Ibid., p.40.

fort at Samdhara. Officers were also sent to carefully inspect the condition of the roads and report. The Deka Phukan of the Guimela Bar-Gohain family and the Dihingia Phukan of Bura-Gohain family were ordered to attack the Muslim fort at Banhbari on the north bank opposite Kajali. Naoshaliya Phukan, the Kaliabaria Phukan and Chaophrang Landaomi Phukan proceeded to the Kallang and besieged the Muslim fort at Kajali.¹⁸⁰ One Raja Rai Singh commanding the Mughul garrison at Kajali fell in the struggle and another officer Sayyid Khan was hurt by an arrow. The fort fell to the Ahoms who captured a great number of Muslims and killed and the rest/also obtained possession of many horses, guns, shields and other materials. On the north bank the Dihingia Phukan and the Deka Phukan marched down along the side of the river Brahmaputra and attacked the Muslims at Banhbari and seized the fort. The Ahoms captured the commanders, Lal Beg and Rosan Beg, of the Muslim garrison and also got possession many horses, guns and other war materials. There were heavy casualties on the side of the Muslims and many were captured alive and sent as prisoners to Garhgaon with the two commanders and the booty.

After liberating the two easternmost forts of Kajali and Banhbari of the Mughuls the Ahom generals moved down with strong battalions to attack Gauhati on both banks. General Lachit Bar-Phukan and ex-Bar-Phukan (now Bar-Barua) Pelan

¹⁸⁰ See for the disposition of the forces AB, pp.196-7; PAB, p.135.

Shairingia Phukan occupied Sonapur and Tatimara and reached Jay Duar where there was a Muslim post. Here Kalanchu Dualiya Rajkhowa fought and killed the Mughul commander, himself losing a finger in the duel. All then advanced to Latasil,¹⁸¹ which they made their base of attack on the powerful fort of Itakhuli (Sukleswar) in the present town of Gauhati. The Ahom generals laid siege to the fort both by land and water in the month of Kartik (Dinshipsong) and a part of the army was sent forth to attack the Mughul garrison at Pandu. The Mughuls tried to oppose the Ahoms on a sand bank near the fort at Pandu, but being soon overpowered, left the fort and retreated westward. The fort was occupied by the Ahoms. At Itakhuli, the main fort of Gauhati, the siege continued and the Mughuls were hard-pressed. One day the Mughuls came out of the fort and tried to break through the siege, but in the struggle, which continued for two days, two Muslim officers, Sayyid Khan and Dulal Khan (probably one Dilir Khan), were killed along with many soldiers of the garrison. Yet the siege became protracted. Hearing this Chakradhvaj Singha sent stern warnings to the Ahom officers for their failure to capture Gauhati so long. At this the latter assembled and drew up a plan of assault and put Abhoypuria Rajkhowa Japang Gohain in charge of it. The Rajkhowa engaged secret agents to pour water into the muzzles of the Muslim guns and cannon and it was successfully carried out one night. In the small

¹⁸¹ within one mile to the east of Itakhuli.

hours of that very night the Ahoms scaled the walls of the fort by means of ladders and Muslims failed to prevent it as most of their guns and cannon did not fire. The gates were opened and the Ahom soldiers dashed into the fort in great strength and annihilated the entire garrison except two soldiers who rode off on their horses and crossed over to Ashvakranta.¹⁸² The Abhoypuria Rajkhowa was also killed during the assault on the fort.¹⁸³ Itakhuli was taken by the Ahoms on 16 Kartik (early November) and of the Mughuls, who survived, a great many surrendered and the rest escaped. The Ahoms seized a large booty including many cannon, guns, elephants, horses and other materials. The fall of Itakhuli brought the present town of Gauhati into the possession of the Ahoms. After a few days a Mughul naval force arrived with a number of ships and reinforced their navy at Gauhati. There was then a naval fight for some days, but the Mughuls suffered a defeat and fled away from the area of Umananda and Barhat with whatever ships they could save from destruction.¹⁸⁴ On the north the Ahom army under the command of Dihingia Phukan and Deka Phukan swept down on Shaburuj. There was a temporary reverse on that front. The Ahom commanders' miscalculations led to the fall of a few Ahom officers and the destruction of the Darangial army that gave support. A Muslim commander named

182 Assam Buranji (1648-1681 A.D.), p. 28.

183 Kamrupur Buranji, p. 91.

184 AB, pp. 198, 199.

Hayat Khan crossed to the north bank and attacked the Ahoms at Duimunia (Duimunisila) but was counter-attacked and killed by Man Hazarika and Dikhaumukhia Rajchowm and his army routed. The Ahoms then constructed a fort at Duimunisila garrisoning it with an Ahom force.¹⁸⁵ One detachment of the Ahom army proceeded up by the Bar Nadi and laid siege to the fort Shang at Rangmahal. The Mughuls came out of the fort and attacked the camp of the Ahom commander, Lamnungkhru. A terrible battle ensued in which a great number of the Mughuls fell dead. The Ahoms, too, suffered casualties. Their officers, Lamnungkhru, Lanklangche and the grandson of Nampun Bar-Gohain were killed. When the report of the Ahom losses reached Chakradhvaj Singha he sent a message to the Gohains at Gauhati that those who would remain inert should be put to death. The Mughuls were, however, dislodged from Rangmahal and their next stand was at Agiathuti. The Ahoms surrounded the fort at Agiathuti both by land and water and occupied it taking many Muslims captive and capturing a large booty. The Ahom navy sailed down to Kalahimukh, between Palashbari and Nagarbera on the south bank, commanding the whole waterway of the Brahmaputra to that point. There was a battle at Kalahimukh in which the Mughuls lost many men and on the side of the Ahoms, among others, Dihingia Phuken's son was killed.

Meanwhile Faujdar Sayyid Firoz Khan, the Mughul General Sayyid Saleh, Mir Bakshi and other Muslims tried to

185 AB, pp.197-203 ; PAB, pp.135-37.

escape to Bengal, but the Ahoms pursued and intercepted them at Marakia. A number of engagements took place one after another at Marakia, Rewa and Lathao till at last at Manahamukh the Ahoms effectively blocked the way of the Mughul chiefs and started firing to prevent their escape. During the exchange of bullets the Dimarua Prince and Maupia, son of the Rajmantri, were on the back of elephants, when accidentally the former was struck by an enemy bullet and fell. At this Maupia dismounted from his elephant and rode a horse. Unable to pass through the barrage-fire of the Ahoms the Faujdar with his companions surrendered. Then the Mughul chiefs, Firoz Khan, Sayyid Saleh and Mir Bakshi with many Mughul prisoners were sent to Garhgaon in charge of Maupia. The Ahoms seized a vast amount of booty consisting of ships, elephants, horses, camels, donkeys, war materials, gold and silver. Among those who escaped were Sayyid Firoz's son, Pahar Khan, and Sayyid Husain. But many Muslims were put to the sword. The Ahoms thus completed the recovery of Kamrup right down to the Manaha, which since then remained the boundary between the Ahom and Mughul territories. The Ahoms also liberated those people who had been forcibly taken away by Mir Jumla and who were found in Kamrup. The king then ordered Banhgaria Bura-Gohain to strongly fortify Sarai Ghat (the present Amingaon) with ramparts. Lachit Bar-Phukan made his permanent residence at Gauhati. At Kaliabar what is known as Rangaligarh (red fort) was constructed. The king, after the victory, went to Visvanath where he performed a yajna.

He then returned to Garhgaon in triumph and said - 'Let me now take my morsel of meal with peace of mind'.¹⁸⁶ He richly rewarded the nobles for their victory and distributed the spoils among the common people. He also ordered the officers to be vigilant so that the enemy might not find any weak front to re-enter the country. The Ahom authorities placed their own officers in the various Mughul parganas of Kamrup to manage their affairs under the direction and control of the Bar-Phukan.

Gait refers to an inscription in Assamese on the Kanai Barasiboa rock near the Manikarneswar temple in North Gauhati as recording the erection of an Ahom fort there in sak 1589 (A.D. 1667) 'after the defeat and death of Sana (Saleh ?) and Sayyid Firoz'. A stone pillar at Gauhati bears a Sanskrit inscription testifying to the victory of the Bar-Phukan in 1667 over the Muslims (Yavanas). An old cannon at Silghat bears the following inscription in Sanskrit :- 'King Chakradhvaj Singha, having again destroyed the Muslims (Yavanas) in battle in sak 1589 (A.D. 1667), obtained this weapon, which proclaims his glory as slayer of his enemies'. Gait mentions another old cannon found at Dikom which bears a similar inscription referring to a victory in the following year. This cannon has also an inscription in Persian, reciting that it was placed in charge of Sayyid Ahmed al Husain

186 AB, pp. 199-200 ; AN - 'SMJC', pp. 110-111 ; PAB, p. 137 ; Assam Buranji (1648-1681 A.D.), pp. 28-29 ; Kamrupar Buranji, p. 92.

for the purpose of conquering Assam in 1074 Hijri (A.D. 1663).¹⁸⁷

In December 1667 the Mughul Emperor at Delhi learnt from the news-reports of Bengal that the Assamese had crossed their own frontier and attacked Gauhati 'with a vast army and a large flotilla ; and that as reinforcement had not reached Sayyid Firuz Khan, the thanadar of the place, the enemy had conquered Gauhati'.¹⁸⁸ He decided that 'one of the great and eminent nobles of the Court should be deputed to Bengal with an army from His Presence to put down the enemy'. Raja Ram Singh,¹⁸⁹ son of Mirza Raja Jay Singh of Amber, was appointed to perform this exploit. On Friday, the 27th December, 1667 (21st Rajab) he was sent off with a robe, a horse with gold trappings and a jewelled dagger with pearl strap. Nasiri Khan, Kesari Singh Bhurtia (Rathor), Raghnath Singh Mairtia, Brahma-deo Sisodia and many other nobles and mansabdars with 1,500 ahadis or gentlemen-troopers and 500 baroandazes were appointed

¹⁸⁷ See for the collection of cannon inscriptions Gait's Report on the Progress of Historical Research in Assam (Shillong, 1897), Appendix I. Also Gait's History of Assam, p.154 and H.C. Goswami's 'Barphukanar Jayastambha' in the Assamese journal Alochani, Vol. VII, pp.480-81 ; and 'Kanai barasi-bos-pillar gadya', Alochani, VII, pp.112-113, 535-536.

¹⁸⁸ Measir-i-Alamgir (as translated by Sir Jamunath Sarkar : Calcutta, Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1947) p.43.

¹⁸⁹ also called the descendant of Mandhata. On the death of Jay Singh the Emperor gave his eldest son, Kumar Ram Singh, the title of Raja and took him into favour. Kumar Ram Singh, who was one of the captains on guard over Sivaji during the latter's captivity at Agra, was punished when Sivaji escaped. Later, when his father died at Burhanpur on July 12, 1667 (20th Muharram, 1078 H) after being poisoned by his younger son, Kirat Singh, at the instigation of Aurangzeb, Ram Singh was made Raja. The Emperor publicly declared himself rejoiced at the death of Jay Singh. (See Storia, vol II, pp.139, 152-3).

under him, Ram Singh was directed to join this force to some of the troops serving in Bengal and proceed to chastise the 'wicked tribe'.¹⁹⁰ Ram Singh also reinforced his army with 4,000 troopers in his own pay and 21 Rajput chiefs. Shajista Khan, the Subahdar of Bengal, supplied him with 30,000 troops¹⁹¹ including 2,000 horsemen and from Koch Behar 15,000 Koch archers commanded by Havi Keshore Baruya, Sarbeswar Baruya, Manmath Baruya and Ghanashyam Bakshi,¹⁹² join the Mughul army. Thus Raja Ram Singh had only about 8,000 troopers¹⁹³ in all round his standards and his losses were seldom replenished. 'The Ahoms being a nation in arms mustered one hundred thousand when mobilised'. On way through Patna the Raja took with himself the Sikh Guru Teg Bahadur¹⁹⁴ who was there for a few months away from his abode at Anandpur. Rashid Khan, the former Faujdar of Kaurip, was sent with the Raja for his two qualifications - first, he was a noted warrior, and second, he had a knowledge of the language of the Ahoms. Raja Indramani, Ghadrund Khan-Commander of 2,500, Alam Khan Du-Hazari,

190 i.e. the Ahoms.

191 RAE, pp.138-39.

192 J.H.Sarkar : op.cit., p.187. See also Amanatulla Ahmed : EL, I, p.169. Prannarayan died in A.D. 1667 and was succeeded by his son Kumar Modanarayan who ruled in Koch Behar from 1667 to 1680. Raja Ram Singh took from Raja Modanarayan 15,000 kandi soldiers and proceeded towards Rangamati in Goalpara.

193 According to RAE Ram Singh had 18,000 Turkish cavalry which is doubtful.

194 J.H.Sarkar, ibid., p.187. Teg Bahadur was the second son of Har Govind, the sixth Guru, and was the father of Guru Govind Singh. For protesting against some of the measures of Aurangzeb Teg Bahadur was executed at Delhi in A.D. 1675.

Bakram Khan Du-Hazari, Dewan Sayyid Gajap Khan Ek-Hazari, Kayam Khan, Julel Beg, Raja Prithu, Raja Manik, Mir Gazraf Khan Beldari-Commander of 2,500, and Parikshit's grandson Raja Jaynarayan from Koch Behar were among those who were ordered by the Padshah to accompany Ram Singh in his expedition to Assam.¹⁹⁵

The Ahoms, on their part, remained prepared to meet the Mughals in the event of a fresh invasion by them after their expulsion from Kamrup. When the news of Ram Singh's advance to invade Assam reached the Ahom Court King Chakradhvaj Singha sent his forces under the command of his veteran generals to Gauhati to assist the Bar-Phukan in opposing the enemy. The Bar-Phukan, in consultation with the three great Cohains, Phukans and Rajkhowas drew up the defence plans and placed the generals with their forces at different strategic points from the southern to the northern hills after constructing a formidable series of ramparts (garh) connecting them. The Bura-Cohain was placed in charge of the garrison at Sarai commanding the north bank opposite Pandu assisted by the Dihingia Phukan and the Bar-Cohain was stationed at Pandu to defend the south bank. Bagchual Barpatra-Cohain was posted at Kurua, an important strategic point across the Bar Nadi above Sarai. The Naoboicha Phukan commanded the navy. The Asurar Ali east of the city of Gauhati, which extended to the Narakasur Hill on the south bank, was guarded by Kaliabaria Phukan.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁵ PAB, p.138.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., p.139.

A graphic description of the disposition of the Ahom officers with their respective forces in and around Gauhati is available.¹⁹⁷ General Lachit Bar-Phukan, who had the main responsibility of defending Kamrup and under whose supreme command the Ahom army had to move and fight, made his camp at Andharu between Itakhuli (Sukreswar) and the Kamakhya Hill on the south bank and awaited Ram Singh's arrival.

197 See, AB - 'SMJC', pp.112-113. On the south bank of the Brahmaputra : Just down Itakhuli-General Lachit Bar-Phukan ; from Amarajuri to Pandu with camp at Pandu - the Bar-Gohain ; from Rangali Buruz to the western steps of the Kamakhya Hill - Tarua Dihingia Rajkhowa's son ; at Dear Garila - Latum, son of Dolakakharis Barua ; from Parghopa to Dhenukhirua - Barukia (Banrukia) Gohain ; from Gotanagar (on the hill-side to the south of Pandu) to the extremity of the Asurar Ali - Hazarika Neog, son of Lechai kandi ; at Asurar Ali - Kaliabaria Phukan ; on the hill south of the Asurar Ali - Marangikhowa Chetia ; on the Ushaharan hill - Namdayangia Rajkhowa Jatichandan.

On the north bank : From Juria to Sarai-Ghat - Bar Abhaypuria Rajkhowa ; facing Sarai - nephew of Saru Abhaypuria Rajkhowa Bar-Barua ; from Kekuri (the bend) to the Lathia Hill - Majeu Dayangia Lammakharu Rajkhowa ; at Lathia Hill - Banhgaria Bura-Gohain ; from the Lathia Hill to Sila Hill - Miri Handikoi Phukan Hazarika Bar Neog and Gajpuria Rajkhowa Dheu Gohain ; from Sindurighopa road to Kharagarua Ali - Tarua-Dihingia Rajkhowa Saru Duara ; to the north of the Sila and Lathia Hills line - Panidihingia Rajkhowa Bura-Gohain Phukan.

On the Brahmaputra : At Asvakranta commanding the river from Rangmahal to Kenai Barasiboa - Shairingia Pelan Phukan ; at Shanburuz - Rup Handikoi ; at Kurua - Bagchual Kala Barpatra Raidangia Phukan assisted by his elder brother Namdangia Rajkhowa. The ramparts were mounted with large-sized cannon and other forms of artillery (such as Kecha, Toa, Gathia-Jambur, Pathar-Kalai etc. at regular intervals measured in terms of beon or about 7 feet) with troops in the order of one man per beon on the ramparts (garh) and on the hills two men per three beons. A description of the organization of the defence lines with artillery divisions posted on both banks of the Brahmaputra and upto the hills is contained in an old manuscript recovered by Prof. U.C.Lekharu.

Ram Singh arrived at Rangamati, the easternmost head-quarters and main military base of the Mughuls, in February, 1663. The weakness of his expeditionary force lay in the smallness of his fleet of about 40 war-vessels only¹⁹⁸ as against the powerful Ahom navy which had regained mastery after Mir Jumla's return from Assam and commanded the whole water-way of the Brahmaputra down to the Manaha. The Feringhi and Mugh pirates operating in the region of south-east Bengal kept the Bengal navy constantly engaged. Though these pirates were suppressed in January, 1666, yet for fear of a recurrence of their hostile activities the Bengal Subahdar could not spare an adequate number of ships for service in Assam. From Rangamati Raja Ram Singh marched along the north bank of the Brahmaputra leaving behind at this base Raja Jay Singh, Raja Sib Singh, Taja Khan and Nasir Khan.¹⁹⁹ When this news reached the Ahom viceroy at Gauhati three Rajkhowas were asked to go forward and stage a retreat within the sight of the enemy near the Barepaita post by the north and south banks and by the water.²⁰⁰ Ram Singh, seeing the Ahoms falling back before him, continued to advance.

At this stage the Ahom Dangarias (ministers) and the Phukans opened negotiations with Ram Singh by sending their envoys Sunder and Komora to the 'Bhai Raja' enquiring as to why he was coming, the real motive in this being to gain some

198 This number of 40 war-vessels is supported by the account in AB (p. 204).

199 AB, p. 205; S.N. Bhattacharyya : op. cit., p. 369.

200 AB - 'SMJC', p. 113.

time to complete the construction of the fortifications, some of which had yet to be given the finishing touches and also to raise sand embankments on the shores of the Brahmaputra to prevent the Mughuls from landing their forces from their fleet. The Bura-Gohain and the Phukans also constructed a fort at Shah-buruz, 'a frontier place to Haraighat in the north near the river, Tilao', and 'five other forts at Dairani in the south of the Tilao (the Brahmaputra)'.²⁰¹ The Bar-Phukan's immediate objective was the defence of Gauhati and the strategic posts around it by a strong concentration of the Lower Assam forces in that area. He therefore withdrew his garrisons from the territories to the west of Hajo and from the forts at Nagarbera, Kalahimukh and Kakphak on the south bank and placed them in and about Gauhati rendering the whole front impregnable to the enemy. So Ram Singh had an easy march from Rangamati right up to Hajo which he occupied without a blow. He captured in this march a number of Assamese posts in Ramdia and Barpeta. On the south bank at Kakphak,²⁰³ where the Ahom armies of the south assembled, two enemy chiefs, one named Jaynarayan and another a Muslim commander attacked the Ahoms. After three days' fighting the enemies were repulsed, but the Ahom armies retreated to Sarai-ghat according to plan at the approach of Ram Singh. At the news of this reverse Raja Indradaman, who was probably in

²⁰¹ AE, pp.201-202.

²⁰² S.N.Bhattacharyya mentions Barumukh (probably Baruabari between Hajo and Ramdia), Chenga (9 miles east of Barpeta) and Tapera (in Ramdia). op.cit., p.369.

²⁰³ not identified.

command ~~xxxxxx~~ of the garrison at Rangamati, marched forward and attacked the Ahom forces, but the latter counter-attacked and forced him to retreat to Jakhali.²⁰⁴

At Hajo Ram Singh is said to have offered prayers to the god Hayagriv Mahav and made very liberal presents of gold, silver and cloth to the Brahmins and Sebaites.²⁰⁵ From this main base he tried to probe the strength of the forts and defence lines of the Ahoms and in consequence skirmishes here and there began to take place. In order to put off for a time any major conflict two envoys, named Sundar Kataki and Komora, were sent to Ram Singh from the Bar-Phukan's Court to enquire about the object of his coming to Assam. Ram Singh explained his object and sent with them Firoz Khan to Bar-Phukan's Court to officially demand the evacuation of Kamrup to the west of the line marked by the Bar Nadi and the Asurar Ali under the treaty of 1639 signed by Allah Yar Khan and Momai Tamuli Bar-Barua.²⁰⁶ As a Raja he was also audacious enough to challenge the Ahom king to a duel and communicated it through a messenger named Sonbar Nadial, but the latter refused to fight it with 'a mere servant' of the Muslim Emperor without any umbrella over his head.²⁰⁷ As a reply to such audacity the Ahom king directed the Phukans and Baruas to come out of their forts and attack the Muslims.²⁰⁸ Firoz Khan was made a captive and detained at

204 AB, p.203.

205 AB - 'SMJC', pp.114-115 ; PAB, p.140.

206 AB - 'SMJC', p.113.

207 AB, pp.208-9.

208 AB, p.209. One Assamese Buranji, quoted by S.K. Bhuyan in his Lachit Barnhukan (p.64), says that Ram Singh having failed to obtain the evacuation of Gauhati by negotiation
(continued on next page).

Latasil and then removed to Kaliabar.²⁰⁹

In response to the exhortation of the king the Ahom officers became prepared for a vigorous attack upon the Imperialists. Lachit himself is said to have realised the folly of such an attack by coming out of the fortified positions into the open ground against the concentrations of the Mughul army with their cavalry divisions. He wanted them to commence the attacks against the barriers built up against them and be exhausted. But the king's orders had to be carried out.

The Bar-Phukan advanced with a fleet to Agiathuti and sent orders to other officers to march against the enemies. The Bura-Gohain also moved to that place for a combined attack by land and water. The Dihingia Gohain entrenched himself at Sessa and Lasham Abhoipuria Rajkhowa, Dihingia Phukan and others with all the Hazarikas proceeded by land to the attack. A series of encounters took place in which the Muslims were worsted and many of them captured with their horses and the Muslims at Agiathuti were massacred.²¹⁰ The Ahoms seized a large booty including the domestic animals of the enemies. In face of this reverse Ram Singh himself came up with his

(continued) fabricated a letter with the words - 'Oh Barphukan, yesterday you accepted from us a reward of one lakh of rupees and you signed a written agreement to desist from fighting against us. But it appears you have not yet abandoned your war-array. May I know the reason?' The Raja, who tried this trick to create dissension in the Ahom camp, tied the letter to an arrow and shot it to the camp of Miri Sandikoi Phukan who, in his turn, forwarded it to the king. The king suspected the Bar-Phukan and himself ordered an attack and sent a warning to the Bar-Phukan against delaying.

²⁰⁹ AB - 'SMJC', p.114.

²¹⁰ AB, p.210.

Rajput cavalry and attacked the Ahoms and forced them to retreat 'on horses and elephants'. The Rajput cavalry also destroyed the land force and the survivors fell back and dashed into the waters of the Sessa river where they were shot dead by the Muslims. Maran Hazarika, the grandson of the Bar-Gohain, was killed in the battle-field. A Muslim naval officer successfully manœuvred some of the ships to the rear of the Ahom army with the result that the Bar-Phukan had to escape with his men by leaving the ships behind. This is what is described as the battle of Alaboi²¹¹ in the Assamese Buranjis.²¹² According to these Buranjis the Rajput cavalymen were led first by a female warrior named Madanavati and when she fell being struck by a bullet Mir Nawab took the command. But Mir Nawab was defeated and captured alive by one Luthuri Rajkhowa. After this preliminary success, when the Assamese troops of about 20,000 strong were returning to their forts, Ram Singh, with his other commanders, brought out a fresh division of Rajput horsemen, who were equipped with Yantras (machines) and long shields, and charged the Assamese army which was unprepared to resist. The Assamese fell an easy prey to the Rajput cavalry in the plains below the Alaboi Hill. The Rajputs won a complete victory killing off as many as 10,000 Assamese soldiers. This was a major disaster for the

²¹¹ Alaboi is a hill in the neighbourhood of Dalibari on the north bank between Amingaon and Hajo.

²¹² Kamrupar Buranji, p.94 ; AB - 'SITG', pp.116-117 ; Ram Singhar Yuddhar Katha (Ms. 334, DHAS) ; Bhuyan : Lachit Barphukan, pp.65-69.

Ahoms. It took place, according to Kamrupar Buranjī (p.94), on the 20th of Graven, Thursday, sak 1591 (August, 1669). When the news of this defeat reached the king a stern warning was sent by him against allowing his army to be killed without fighting and he also found fault with the Bar-Phukan for not making any enquiry about his ships and also for not acting according to his instructions. From the succinct records in the Ahom Chronicle it is not clear where and how the instructions were violated. It might be that the Alaboi disaster after the initial success was the consequence of not properly following the king's instructions. The king made it plain to the Bar-Phukan that he would not even spare him if he neglected his duties and did not make an enquiry as to whether any one 'refrained willingly from fighting'.²¹³

Having won the Alaboi victory Ram Singh thought that it would be easy to make the Ahoms agree to the Mughul demand for evacuation of Gauhati and Kamrup. He then started a new series of peace overtures and 'the negotiation for peace was circulated to our men (the Ahoms). Our men expressed their willingness' for peace.²¹⁴ At this stage King Chakradhvaj Singha became ill and shortly afterwards died in A.D. 1669.

Relations With The Neighbouring Rajas :

Chakradhvaj Singha's relation with the Jayanta Raja

²¹³ AB, pp.210-211.

²¹⁴ Ibid. p.212.

Jashamatta Singha was very cordial. Jashamatta repeatedly emphasized in his letters to the Svargadev that the bond of friendship between the two countries was firm and indissoluble and expressed his pleasure at the matrimonial relation that subsisted between the two royal houses. He also made common cause with the Ahoms against the Mughuls. It appears from the correspondences between the two Courts that the Jayanta Raja helped Chakradhvaj Singha with at least twenty thousand troops, if not more.²¹⁵ During Chakradhvaj Singha's reign towards the end of A.D. 1668 Jashamatta Singha died and his grandson Man Singha became Raja of Jayanta.²¹⁶

The relation with the Kachari Raja Viradarpanarayan was not as cordial, but yet his friendship with the Ahom king was not severed. The Marangial Barohetia, who took shelter in the Kachari country during Mir Jumla's invasion, still lived there. Chakradhvaj Singha wrote a letter to the Kachari Raja and also related through his envoys the misfortunes that overtook his country during Mir Jumla's invasion and under which many nobles and officers had to enter the neighbouring countries for refuge. He further informed the Kachari Raja through them that all had returned to the country except the Barohetia and requested that, if he was there, he might be sent back. But the Kachari Raja expressed his inability to comply with his request on the ground that

²¹⁵ Jayanta Raja's letters to Chakradhvaj Singha and the letters addressed by the three great Gohains to the Jayanta Raja. See JB, pp. 35-38.

²¹⁶ JB, p. 38.

the Barchetia had come as a refugee and submitted to him.²¹⁷ He also pointed out to the Ahom envoys the various difficulties in the matter of communication with the Ahom Court. Some sort of a tension continued between the Ahom and the Kachari governments during Chakradhvaj Singha's reign and it may be assumed that Viradarpanarayan rendered no assistance to the Ahom king during Ram Singh's invasion of Assam.

Chakradhvaj Singha's Character :

Chakradhvaj Singha was a sovereign in the real sense of the term. His spirit of independence was unsurpassed and his patriotism intense. His oft-quoted heroic utterance - 'Better death than be under the Bangals' - remains to this day an inspiring source of patriotism to every cultivated Assamese and brings to mind the whole history of the glorious period of Assam. He literally fulfilled the dying desire of Jayadvaj Singha that his successor should defend and reconstruct the country devastated by the foreign invaders. It was entirely through his untiring effort and personal supervision of every detail that he achieved this end. No office was more responsible and risky than that of the Bar-Phukan and almost all previous Bar-Phukans had to be penalized either for incapacity or indiscipline. But the historic choice of Lachit as Bar-Phukan by Chakradhvaj Singha above all others shows his matchless power of judgment.

217 KB. pp. 51-54.

That this monarch could so soon restore the lost prestige of the Assamese by throwing off the Mughul overlordship would ever remain a matter of profound significance in Assam history.

22. Hso-Nyat-Hpa alias Udayaditya (1669-1673) :

The next king to succeed Chakradhvaj was not his son but his brother called Maju Gohain. On his accession to the throne he assumed the name Hso-Nyat-Hpa and also the Hindu name Udayaditya. He took as his queen the chief queen of his deceased brother.

In Lakni Kapshan (A.D. 1670) or shortly after his accession the Bura-Gohain and the Bar-Phukan informed him of the progress of negotiation for peace with the Muslims. The boundary question was being discussed at the time between the Ahom representatives, Kaupatia Hazarika and Madhavcharan, and the Mughul representatives Paritrai (Panditrai) and another person. As instructed the Mughul representatives insisted on the Ahom government's respecting the boundary as settled under the treaty of 1639. They attached too much sanctity to that agreement without regard to the subsequent developments. Ram Singh wanted Gauhati alone with the territories west of it and promised never to ask for more in future. After a further course of negotiation the Bar-Phukan was inclined to concede ~~and~~ to the Muslim proposal and sent it for the king's approval, but the Bura-Gohain did not support the idea of giving up Gauhati. Meanwhile the Muslims entered Darrang. The king ordered them to go back and asked his officers

to repair the forts. He also ordered the Bura-Gohain, who was at Kathalbari, to proceed to Sarai Ghat with 20,000 men.²¹⁸

At this time the naval Commander Munawwar Khan with three Omraos arrived with reinforcements, obviously with a naval squadron, for Ram Singh who had been fighting for ten months without success. These Muslim chiefs did not like this stalemate and opposed the negotiations for peace the fate of which were then sealed.²¹⁹ Ram Singh had to yield to their pressure. This being against his will he expressed in disgust - 'I could not get victory. But now, I wish to see you get the royal umbrella'. But a dissension arose in Raja Ram Singh's camp. Rashid Khan, the Tin-Hazari and former Faujdar of Kamrup, proved insubordinate to the Raja. Having once lived in this country in great splendour commanding respect from all and being well-known among the Ahoms, Rashid could not tolerate the idea that he should now take orders from Ram Singh. Contrary to the military arrangement of the expedition he claimed equality of rank with Ram Singh and behaved in that fashion. He was suspected of being in ^{secret} alliance with the Ahoms. He openly became disloyal to his General, non-co-operated with him and withdrew with his men from Sarai ghat to Hajo. He refused to come when he was called back by Ram Singh.²²⁰ At last Ram Singh took the drastic measure of

²¹⁸ AB, p.214.

²¹⁹ Ibid., p.215 ; Kamrupar Buranji, p.96.

²²⁰ AB - 'SMJC', p.115 ; PAB, p.141-142.

expelling this refractory Muslim officer from his camp by cutting his tent ropes.²²¹ It seems that the top-ranking Muslim officers did not repose full confidence in the Rajput Chief, Ram Singh, and hence did not allow him a free hand in the vital matters. This is clear from the nature of interference by them in his line of war policy and from Rashid Khan's conduct in defiance of his orders. Probably Rashid Khan was sent with this expedition as a confidential agent by the Emperor to watch and report on the conduct of the Rajput General. Whatever may be the allegations against him he was confident of his position, otherwise he could not have acted as he had done.

Meanwhile Ram Singh was promoted in his rank by the Emperor.²²² With the arrival of reinforcements he also found himself strong enough to subjugate the Ahoms. He ordered a general attack on Gauhati. It may be noted that Gauhati was a fortified city with ten gates - five on the north bank and five on the ~~bank~~ south in between which there was the great waterway of the Brahmaputra, which flows from the east to west. The five northern gates from east to west were the Kanai-barasiboa Chauki, the Hillar Chauki, Sindurighopa, Pat-duar and the Korai or Pani Chauki and those on the southern bank in the same order were the Latasil or Pani Chauki, the Joiduar, the Dharamduar, Duar

(Sir)

221/J.N. Sarkar : op.cit., pp.188-89.

222 Magir-i-Alamgiri, p.97 as referred to by S.N. Bhattacharyya in his Mughul North-east Frontier Policy, p.375.

Guria and the Pandu Chauki.²²³ On the north Ram Singh advanced eastward and took his position facing the fortifications. Mansur Khan, Sarip Khan and the Feringhis were to break through Pani Chauki (or Panibat) ; Haji Beg, Kayam Khan and the whole Koch Behar army of 15,000 dhali-kandis led by Kavi Kishore Barua, Sarbeswar Barua, Manmath Barua and Chanashyam Bakshi appeared before Sindurighopa ; one strong detachment under the command of Ali Bakr Khan, Mir Sayyid Khan, Raja Indramani,²²⁴ Raja Barnadia, Jaynarayan, Marul Khan Sardar and Isman Khan (probably Osman Khan) was sent to attack on the south bank. One detachment also proceeded towards Darrang. There was constant fighting from April to August of 1670 for the capture of Gauhati, but the veteran Ahom generals like Banhgaria Aten Bura-Gohain, Langisong Bar-Gohain, Abhaypuria Rajkhowa, Tarun Dihingia Rajkhowa, Shairingia Pelan Phukan and others, fighting from their impregnable fortifications on different fronts under the inspiring leadership of their supreme Commander General Lachit Bar-Phukan, baffled all the enemy efforts to enter the city

223 Robinson : Descriptive Account of Assam, pp.286-87. 'During the splendour of the Assam dynasty, Gowhatti was one of the largest cities in the kingdom. It occupied within its fortifications a vast extent of country on both banks of the great stream ; the hills on either side forming a spacious amphitheatre, equally well fortified by nature and by art. ... The entrances into the city were by guarded passes, or chowkies, of which there were five on either bank of the river.... The ruins of the gateways of some of these passes are still to be seen, and the remains of the extensive fortifications may to this day be traced for miles, in the mounds and ditches, that now serve only to mark the extent of the ancient citadel'. Ibid.

224 appears to be the same person as Indradaman from the accounts.

of Gauhati.²²⁵ The Mughals simply suffered losses in men and material. Unable to break through at any point the Mughals made attempts to blow up the fortifications from underground, first at Pandu and then at Sarai, but in them they were frustrated. At Pandu a breach was created at Rengaliburuz but it was immediately sealed up with materials kept ready for the purpose. Sir Jadunath Sarkar (op.cit., p.189), from his sources, also refers to the Nagas as coming to the aid of the Ahoms, and these wild warriors proved a new danger to the Mughals.

At Delhi the Emperor was impatient of the delay in taking Gauhati. He sent envoys to warn Ram Singh against any kind of peace negotiation with the Ahoms and to ask for war materials if necessary. Ram Singh replied that war materials, such as guns and spears, were not in want and pointed out that the battle-field was not a plain field for the Mughul cavalry to attack ; the city was surrounded on both banks of the river by strong lines of ramparts and fortifications ; in face of such obstacles land warfare did not succeed ; there was possibility of an attack only by water.²²⁶ At this moment Ram Singh got letters from his wife and mother that his son, Krishna Singh, was made to fight with tigers as a sport by the Emperor, the object at heart being to get him killed, but Krishna Singh saved himself by killing the animals with his sword within the lists. The General became depressed to get such a news. Yet, unable to return without doing his job, he

225 PAB, p.142-43 ; AB, p.216.

226 AB - 'SMJC', p.121.

determined to fight a naval battle and ordered his commanders to get his fleet ready for action.

In the meantime the detachment that entered Darrang created a state of war in that country. The queen of Darrang secretly communicated to the Bar-Phukan the news of the aggression by the Mughuls into her territory and sought his advice. The apparent objective of the Mughul detachment was to find a passage through that country to attack the Ahom territory in the rear of Gauhati and a request was sent to the Darrangi Rani ²²⁷ for granting it. The Bar-Phukan asked her not only not to grant any passage to the Mughuls, but to resist them in their advance in that direction and he assured her of his support if necessary. Being encouraged by Bar-Phukan's reply she led the Mughuls into a hill pass where they were attacked and massacred by her men from a vantage-ground and their arms, money and other properties seized. This ended their adventure through Darrang.

The Mughul manoeuvre on the south bank was to proceed to Doirani to surround the Ahom army in the advance post from the rear and cut off its connection with its main bases at Pandu and Gauhati. The Ahom spies informed the Bar-Phukan of this enemy plan. The Rani Raja²²⁸ also sent news to the Bar-Phukan of the movement of Mughul officers with troops to the south bank. The Bar-Phukan immediately despatched a force

²²⁷ Queen of Darrang.

²²⁸ The Garo Queen of the Rani State to the south-east of Pandu was also known as Rani Raja.

under the command of Gajpuria Rajkhowa assisted by one Lasham of Bar-Gohain family, one Nadadeu and some Hazarikas against the enemies. Meanwhile at the news of the march of Ahom reinforcements a great number of Muslims hurried to the aid of their army on the Dakshinkul. Gajpuria Rajkhowa secured the co-operation of the Garo Rani for the defence of the south bank territories and the Garos joined the Ahom army to fight with the Muslims. The Muslims set fire to some of the dwellings of the Garos and advanced to the fort at Pamali and attacked the garrison. At this time the Marangikhowa Gohain arrived and with Gajpuria Rajkhowa made a fierce attack on the Muslims and defeated them. The Garo Rani's men massacred a number of Muslims at Kapili and captured an enemy chief, said to be the son of Raja Barnadia. He was made over to the Svargadev with other spoils. Thus the Mughul campaign in the Dakshinkul ended with complete failure. The Ahoms acquired a large booty of war materials and horses which was sent up to the capital.

The Battle Of Sarai Chat (March, 1671) :

Being defeated on all fronts on land Ram Singh had to rely on his navy as the last resort. His original fleet of forty ships was chiefly manned by Feringhis.²²⁹ Added to that were a number of ships brought by Munawwar Khan. The Mughul naval commandant Sharif Khan,²³⁰ assisted by a few other

²²⁹ Europeans. S.N. Bhattacharyya : op.cit., p.368.

²³⁰ PAB, p.147.

officers, was ordered to lead a naval attack on Gauhati. At this crucial moment the two chief naval Commandants, Dauki Pani Phukan and Naoboicha Phukan and also the Bar-Phukan himself fell ill.²³¹ The Mughuls advanced up the Brahmaputra with their fleet of war-vessels carrying their army and the horses to land at Andharu at Gauhati. A few days back the Mughul ambassador Panditrai had visited the Bar-Phukan's Court and saw no embankments at Andharubali. This he reported to his General. It was therefore thought by the Mughul Commanders that the landing of their men and horses would be easy at that open shore for an attack on Gauhati. But, in the meantime high sand banks were thrown up by the Ahoms all along it from the foot of the Kamakhya Hill to that of Sukreswar. When the Mughul fleet reached the Juria Hill the Ahoms retreated to Asvakranta. This compelled their land forces also to retreat in order to avert an encircling movement by the enemy.²³² The absence of the chief naval officers from the field of battle, particularly the illness of the Bar-Phukan, worked as a major crisis at the moment in the naval command of the Ahoms and initially dispirited their forces and those, charged with the conduct of the naval warfare, were in hesitancy when the offensive was led by the Muslims with great strength. Even with high temperature in his body Lachit Bar-Phukan remained alert and had to be informed every few minutes about the advance of

²³¹ Ibid., p.147.

²³² AB, p.215 ; AB - 'SMJC', p.122.

the enemy up the river. There was such a concentration of the Ahom navy at Gauhati that it was possible to walk over the bridge of war-boats alone from one bank to the other of Brahmaputra. The Mughuls pressed forward to the open shore of Andharubali and the Ahoms fell back to the Bar-Sila after an action which did not succeed in stemming the enemy's progress.²³³ It seemed as if there was a break-down in the command, though there was no any inherent lack of energy and strength of the Ahom navy, which had regained its supremacy under Chakradhvaj Singha. It did not take long for the Ahom experts, after their conflict with the European naval-fighters under Mir Jumla, to reorganize their navy on a new and more efficient basis. Some of the Assamese boat-men wanted to retreat to Kajali and Samdhara. The Bar-Phukan was watching this scene from his camp at Andharu and was upset at the cowardice and foolishness on the part of his men. When the enemies were sighted not far from Andharubali and a critical situation developed the Bar-Phukan sent Katakis to all the land and naval forces ordering them to attack the enemies. He also called for himself seven war-boats and asked his attendants to take him with his temperance into one of them. His fleet of seven boats with mounted guns sped towards the enemies. This gallant and extra-ordinary act of the Ahom General at once brought back the morale of his army and the navy and immediately the shore batteries ~~the~~ of the Ahoms and

the archers, on the north and south banks, went into action with terrific volleys and their naval forces fell up the Mughul fleet and threw it into confusion. There was a big battle in the area of Sarai Ghat and both the sides called up all their strength. The Shairing Phukan, the Neog Katakai and many Hazarikas proceeded from Rangmahal and joined their army. In the violent contest the Mughul Commandant Sharip Khan and two other Omraos commanding the navy fell dead. Innumerable Mughul soldiers were killed and many of their boats with men, horses and war materials were sunk. The survivors made a precipitate retreat in their boats.²³⁴ A vast amount of booty came into the possession of the Ahoms. There was no other fighting after the naval fight.²³⁵ This was the historic battle of Sarai Ghat fought in the middle of March, 1671, which became Waterloo for the mighty Mughuls in the east and their territorial ambitions in this direction were basically curbed for all time except for a short period on treacherous transfer of Gauhati to them by Lachit's successor.

According to one Buranji, being unable to take Gauhati by fighting for one year Ram Singh retreated to Rangamati when still there were six days of Chaitra (about 7th April)²³⁶ in the year 1671. In the Ahom Buranji also the date of retreat is given as Lakni Depreo or A.D. 1671 in the month of Dinhe (Chaitra or March-April) and as such early

234 AB, pp.215-16 ; PAB, pp.147-49 ; AB - 'SMJC', pp.122-23.

235 PAB, p.149.

236 Assam Buranji (1648-1681 A.D.), p.31.

April seems to be the probable date. On his way to Rangamati Ram Singh again visited the Havagriba Madhav temple at Hajo where he made the remarks before the Brahmins that 'the Bar Nawab (Bar-Phukan), too, is a man of extra-ordinary capacity. His fortifications resemble a machine. I found no loopholes anywhere'. The Hengarabari Thakuria personally communicated these remarks to the Bar-Phukan, who then inferred from them that the enemies had lost their morale. Ram Singh's retreat was carefully watched by the Ahom spies and the possibility of his return was studied. Some enthusiasts wanted to attack the retreating General with the object of seizing a rich booty, but the Bar-Phukan reminded them of the lesson of Alaboi against such a hasty proposition. Ram Singh appears to have lived at Rangamati on the Assam border for about five years before he received permission finally in A.D. 1676 to leave Bengal and he reached the imperial Court in June of that year.²³⁷ He was probably too war-weary and weak to return for a fresh attack. After Kamrup was brought under order the Bar-Phukan, being directed by the king, made Chandranarayan Raja of Uttarkul and Gandharbanarayan Raja of Dakshinkul.

²³⁷ N.N. Sarkar : History of Aurangzib III, p.190. Gait points out that according to the Alamgirnamah, Ram Singh was in Assam from 1667 till 1685, but this is doubtful except as a punishment inflicted on him by the Emperor, of which there is no evidence.

Minor Events :

In April, 1672, three Dafia chiefs, Hara Gam, Radha Gam and Tari Gam stopped paying tributes to the Ahom king and came down from the hills and raided a village called Taiban at Gagaldubi in the Ahom territory in the present North Lakhimpur Sub-Division. They cut off the heads of three men in that village and carried off forty inhabitants including children. When the matter was reported to king Udayaditya the latter despatched Ao Gohain's son Ghora Konwar Bar-Barua with one thousand men against the Daffas. He proceeded with his force up the river Subansiri and encamped at Rangamati. Next he advanced to Dulungmukh where he erected a fort. From this place he sent up to the hills his two Katakis, Tita and Tuba, both probably Daffas, to ask the offenders to submit and return the king's subjects taken captive assuring them that they would be left unmolested if they yielded. But the Daffas, instead of coming down, went up farther into the jungles and the mission failed. The king, on being informed of the situation, ordered the Dafia Katakis to be arrested and released only if they could assure the submission of the offenders. The Bar-Barua crossed to Gangmukh and then led his expedition into the Dafia country reaching the side of the stream Somdiri and thence the mouth of the Sikling where he erected a stockade. After camping there he farther advanced and reached the mouth of the stream Pati. The Daffas so far eluded contact with him. Then

after constructing a few forts here and there the Bar-Barua released Tita and Tuba and ordered the Chutiya and Sungi Hazarikas to proceed with these Katakis to higher hills and devastate the Dafla villages. But when they climbed up the hills and reached the villages the Chief or Gam of the Daflas, named Kabakara, surrounded with his men the Bar-Barua's detachment, composed of archers and the Hazarikas and overpowered and massacred them. Two Hazarikas-Khaga and Kharagam-fell dead in the struggle and some were captured alive and made prisoners. The Dafla Katakis were put to death earlier by the Daflas of a village. The disaster made the Bar-Barua retreat to Anglung. When the news reached the king, he ordered the Bar-Barua's return and wanted to execute him for his failure, but he was spared only at the intercession of the king's mother.²³⁸ It was always difficult to tackle the Daflas because of their jungle habits. Their raiding propensity was strong, but when a regular force would pursue them they would become elusive and vanish into the jungles of high hills leaving their villages. They could be brought to submission only by the destruction of their properties and creating scarcity of food and cattle. The king dismissed the Ghora Konwar and appointed Shairingia Pelan Phuken as Bar-Barua.²³⁹

238 A detailed account of this Dafla expedition is contained in AB, pp. 218-221. It is also contained in brief in some of the Assamese Buranjis, such as AB - 'SMJC', pp. 124-125; Assam Buranji (1648-1681), pp. 31-32.

239 Assam Buranji (1648-1681), p. 32.

There was also a Miri trouble, but it was speedily suppressed by Sengdhara Bar-Barua's son Simaluguria Phukan. The Miris submitted to the Svargadev with offer of Patsiya mani, Sikara dah, Jim kanor and hunting dogs.²⁴⁰

There was also a clash between the Chutiyas and the Miris, some of whose villages were devastated by the Lukteng Chutiyas and the Mar-boats, made by the Miris to be offered as tributes to the Ahom king, taken away. A Chutiya Chief, named Narai Gam, was arrested and chained by the Ahom officers. The Chutiyas were asked to pay their annual tributes which they had not paid. The Taikaphi Chutiyas were arrested and severely dealt with for not returning the king's Mar-boats, which they had illegally seized from the Miris.²⁴¹

The Mishmis of Sadiya also raided the salt-spring area, destroyed a bridge and killed twelve men of Balihat. Debera Hazarika was ordered by the king to proceed to Sadiya and destroy the Mishmi villages, but he was then engaged in a plot against the king and took time to lead the expedition. Soon afterwards the king was overthrown and it is not known whether any expedition could be sent.

Death Of Lachit Bar-Phukan :

The news of the Ahom victory at Sarai Ghat and Ram Singh's retreat was officially communicated to the king by

²⁴⁰ Assam Buranji (1648-1681 A.D.), p.32.

²⁴¹ For details see AB, pp.224-227.

the Bar-Phukan by sending his special representative, Ram Kataki. The king was greatly pleased at the glorious victory achieved by the Assam army and rewarded all as they deserved. The Bar-Phukan then reoccupied Kamrup and sent men and officers to take possession of the outpost at Manahamukh and establish a Chauki there.²⁴² The various forts and check-posts all over this territory, both on the north and south banks, were reconstructed and duly garrisoned.²⁴³ It appears from Lachit Bar-Phukan's works after Ram Singh's departure from Assam that he did not die of the illness he had at the time of the battle of Sarai Ghat. His death occurred about April, 1672,²⁴⁴ that is, about one year after the battle. His elder brother Nimati Phukan was then appointed Bar-Phukan, who was also known as Laluksola Bar-Phukan.

Udayaditya's Religious Fanaticism :
Its Repercussion :

When the hostilities with the Mughuls ceased king Udayaditya appointed Papang Chaodang Barua to search out and arrest those persons who turned disloyal to the cause of the Ahoms and stopped paying tributes to the king during the long wars with the Mughuls. Persons so arrested were ordered to be deported to Kamrup. 'In the course of these enquiries', as pointed out by Gait, 'it was reported that amongst those who had taken the part of the Muhammadans was a priest named

²⁴² PAB, p.150.

²⁴³ AB - 'SMJC', p.124.

²⁴⁴ Assam Buranji (1648-1681 A.D.), p.32.

Chakrapani, a descendant of the Vaishnava reformer Senkar Deb, but it was impossible to punish him as he had escaped across the frontier'.²⁴⁵ The Tai-Ahom account says that 'one of the Dhekeris fled away and remained in a house at Hadira. He became a Baragi. For many days, he put up in the house of one Daba and gave him many good instructions. Daba intimated the king of the Baragi'.²⁴⁶ According to S.K. Bhuyan Daba was a Brahmin official at Garhgaon.²⁴⁷ Thus there is little doubt that Chakrapani returned under the guise of a Boiragi from Brindavan. Whatever other accounts may say one Buranji²⁴⁸ clearly states that during Udayaditya's reign three sadhus, namely, one Gakulpuri, one Brindavan Boiragi and one local Kalitakuchia Fakir appeared in Kamrup. The Gakulpuri made his abode on the Nilachal (Kamakhya) Hill just to the west of the town of Gauhati and the Fakir lived down Hajo, probably in Ramdia. It was the Boiragi alone who visited Bhramarakunda in the east and then proceeded farther east to Kalabari from where he either made his way to Garhgaon or was summoned by the king who heard much about his spiritual powers from the Brahmin Daba under whose protection he was then living and, at the time of being summoned, was on a visit to Kalabari, an easternmost locality in Darrang. This Boiragi, after his flight from Assam, might have visited Brindavan and

245 Gait : op.cit., p.158.

246 AB, p.226. In his Atan Buragohain etc. Bhuyan gives the name of the Boiragi as Paramananda Sannyasi which, if at all, must be an assumed name.

247 Bhuyan : Atan Buragohain and His Times (Lawyers Book Stall, Gauhati) 1957, p.83.

248 AB - 'SLJC', p.125.

on return was either thought to be a man of the western country by the local people or introduced himself as such remembering his past offence. The king heard his religious discourses and was so much fascinated that he built for the Boiragi a satra (monastery) on the side of the Chumpara-duar.²⁴⁹ He also gave him a grant of land at Samaguri and made him his spiritual preceptor.²⁵⁰ The Boiragi further enjoyed the right to convert the king's subjects to his faith and realize a tax²⁵¹ from them.

At his instance the king ordered the Bura-Gohain, the Bar-Gohain, the Barpatra-Gohain, the Phukans, the Baruas, the Hazarikas, the Baras and others to pay respect to the Baragi and take his saran.²⁵² In obedience to the king's order they all became disciples of the Boiragi by going through the ceremony of saran, but the Dangarias (the three great Gohains) became offended with the king for the compulsion.²⁵³ Not satisfied with this, with the characteristic zeal of a neophyte the king summoned the twelve well-known Thakuria Mahantas of his kingdom including the Moemara Mahanta to be initiated by the Boiragi, for, in the king's opinion, even these twelve Mahantas could not be equal in spiritual attainments to him.²⁵⁴ The Boiragi's

²⁴⁹ Ibid., p.120 ; AB, says that the king built for him a house near the Dikhau river. (p.223). He became known as Boiragi Bapu, of whom the name and race were unknown. Vide Assam Buranji (1648-1681 A.D.), p.33.

²⁵⁰ Gait : op.cit., p.153.

²⁵¹ It was perhaps the beginning of what is called the guru-kar system in addition to the raj-kar or tax to the king.

²⁵² Saran is the initiation ceremony. AB, pp.223-24.

²⁵³ AB, p.224.

²⁵⁴ AB - 'SMJC', p.126 ; PAB, p.150.

ambition knew no bounds. He sent one Brahmin Kataki and one Baragi Kataki to the country of the Chutiyas to convert the inhabitants. The two Katakis converted some people of that country and 'realized taxes from half the people'. But the people of the Bardeyalia Chutiya village refused to be converted and paid nothing and the Bardeyalia Phukan did not receive these missionary Katakis, whom he wanted to go back. The conversion itself was unpopular and provoked resentment among the people; the taxation with it only added fuel to the fire.

The Thakuria disciples could not tolerate the highly unwise and extreme step of compelling their Gosains (religious preceptors) against their will to get initiated with the new Boiragi. As the Court and the country were seething with discontent at the mad policy of the monarch a group of five people, namely, Lai Lapet's brother's son Dakshinapatiya Hazarika Lasai alias Debara of Lukkakhun family, Mohan Hazarika of Ratanpur, Kalia Chaudang Barua, Tairai Dolakacharia Barua and Iuthuri's son Lehm organized an armed band with the object of overthrowing him. They also secured the consent of the king's brother, the Daka Raja, (or Sarujana Gohain) to succeed to the throne after him. The Boiragi, the chief queen, the Bar-Barua, one Papang Barua-Neog, the grandson of the Barchetia and the mother of Tasan Barua, being aware of the ominous developments for an insurrection, consulted between themselves and apprised the king of his brother's 'conspiracy against him'. The king then

ordered for the arrest of the Deka Raja. In face of this the leaders of the revolutionary group decided to put an end to the king's reign and soon in one night in Lakni Mongkeu (A.D. 1673) in the month of Dinship (August-September) marched with one thousand men from Dakshinpat and Ratanpur to the king's residence at Haithaguri with the Deka Raja as its leader. The Deka Raja came to the gate of the city and found it closed. He asked the sentry, Pasan Himeli, to open the gate but the latter refused to comply. The Deka Raja then made his way with his band of armed men by breaking open the gate and instantly put the sentry to death. Daba Brahmin's house was in front of the Pani-duar. Both Daba and his son were brought out and beheaded. He then made a violent attack on the party of the king and killed Charingia Pelan Bar-Barua, the Ranua-Neog, the grandson of the Barchetia, Jayanda, the Simaluguria Phukan and many others and captured the Boiragi and the mother of Tasan who were heavily enchained. Having thus isolated the king he dismissed his attendants, and put him under strict guards. Next day the deposed king was removed to Charaideo where he was executed and his three queens also suffered the same fate.²⁵⁵ The Boiragi was put into a cage and later impaled and set adrift on a raft on the Dikhou river.²⁵⁶ In this struggle the three great Gohains, the Salal Gohain and many others took the side of the Deka Raja.²⁵⁷

²⁵⁵ Assam Buranji (1643-1681 A.D.), p. 33 ; AB, pp. 228-229 ; AB - 'SMJC', pp. 126-127.

²⁵⁶ AB, p. 228-229 ; Assam Buranji (1643-1681 A.D.), p. 33.

²⁵⁷ AB, p. 228.

Ramadhvaj To Lara Raja (1673-1681) :
Reigns Of Weak Kings :

With the end of Udayaditya's reign the most vigorous and stable period of Tai-Ahom rule in Assam may be said to have virtually ended. There then ensued a period of weak and unstable government during which it was not the kings, but his officers, who controlled the affairs. After the bloody and fratricidal strife occasioned by the religious fanaticism of Udayaditya the Deka Raja was placed on the throne by the revolutionary group. The Raja assumed the Tai-Ahom name Hso-Klan-Hpa and the Hindu name Ramadhvaj Singha.

This new king proclaimed the important state policy that no king should go to indulge in matters spiritual and regulate the religious faith of the people as was done by his predecessor, Udayaditya.²⁵⁸ He offered to Lasham Debera,²⁵⁹ the most powerful leader of ^{the} revolutionary group, the post of Bar-Barua. Such a big lift of Debera, who at once became all-powerful, was probably not liked by the nobles of the Court. The Benwukia Langisong Bar-Cohain, who had so recently supported the Deka Raja against the late king, was suspected of having a talk with the Shairing Raja, the late king's son, in order to make the latter king. This suspicion was based on a report that the king had from Sengmun of a Bar-Cohain family and Debera's nephew. Without proper enquiry

²⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 229.

²⁵⁹ His Ahom name was Lasai. 'Phukelung Lasai' in the Tai-Ahom text. See AD, pp. 234-235.

into the matter both the Bar-Gohain and the Shairing Raja were arrested by him and executed. In some Buranjis the charge is said to be false. He then appointed Sengman as Bar-Gohain.²⁶⁰

During the reign of Ramadhwaj the Chutiyas, or rather the Deori Chutiyas, defied the authority of the Ahom king. But soon they were brought under control and made to recognise the Ahom king as their sovereign and supply elephant tusks, wild cows, Sikaredaog (a kind of deh or big knife), Jim cloths and some female slaves as tributes. The Miris offered their tributes, as fixed earlier, to ~~the~~ Tamulidalai, the officer in charge of the Chutiya and Miri affairs appointed by the Ahom king. Further Naraigam, the Chief of the Taikaphi Chutiyas, who had become insubordinate, pledged fidelity to the Ahom king by drinking liquor before the Ahom Basa Barua and agreed to pay tributes of Bar-boats.²⁶¹ The Naga Mishmis, who had raided the Ahom territory and killed some men and with whom the Doenias also joined, were put down by the Bar-Phukan and compelled to deliver the offenders and also pay tributes.²⁶²

In the month of Dinhe (March-April) in Lakni Katploo (A.D. 1675) the king became seriously ill and thought

²⁶⁰ Assam Buranji (1648-1681 A.D.), p.34 ; K.T.P. on.cit., p.42 ; AB - 'SMJC', p.128 ; Kamrupar Buranji, p.97 ; PAB, p.151. According to AB, (p.231) the king got the report that the Shairing Raja had taken Taimung. The king proceeded there and upon enquiry found the Raja guilty and hence ordered him to be put to death.

²⁶¹ AB, pp.229-230.

²⁶² Ibid., pp.231-233 for details.

he would not live long. He called in his nephew, son of the late king, and his brothers Tipam and Namrupia Rajas to see him. On their arrival the question of succession came up for discussion among the nobles and ministers. 'Some of the officers wished to make the Tipam Raja their king, some the son of Chao Hso-Nyat-Hpa and the others Chao-Ladem', the son of Ramadhvaj by his chief queen.²⁶³ A strong group headed by Thenkhrungnyeu, son of Tangu Bar-Gohain, forcefully advocated the cause of Kalia Gohain, the son of Udayaditya and talked with the king about it. Debera found himself ignored in this discussion though he was 'at the root of Chao Hso-Nyat-Hpa's deposition'. Debera's anxiety arose lest the late king's son be made king, in which case he was bound to suffer. Hence he, with his associates, became ready for action. At this threatening attitude of Debera a group of nobles and officers headed by Thenkhrungnyeu urged the king not to allow the insurgents to go unpunished. The king was unable to tolerate Debera's audacity and was for putting him to death. But Debera mustered a larger body of men and challenged the king's party. He attacked and put to death Thenkhrungnyeu. Thereafter he and his armed associates killed and beheaded a large number of officers and men in the capital and liquidated his opponents. He then conspired with the king's cook and the physician Kharmaju and mixed up poison, prepared by the physician, with the king's meal. The king died from

²⁶³ AB, pp. 233-234.

the effect of that poison in the month of Dinha (March-April) in A.D. 1675. He ruled the country for one year and eight months.²⁶⁴

This king established a satra (Hindu monastery) at Gajpur for the Thakur of Norwa. He expiated himself at Gulpura Ghat for killing the Brahmins and the Boiragi and made presents to the Brahmins and Doivajnas. It is said that he also performed Hari Sava (worship of Hari) for seven days and seven nights.²⁶⁵ He rebuilt the town of Sonari and constructed in it a number of new buildings.²⁶⁶

The next king to be raised to the throne by Debera Bar-Barua was Chao Kham-Jang of Samaguri. At Debera's instance he made one of the queens of the late king his chief queen. She was a daughter of Momai-Tamuli Bar-Barua²⁶⁷ and sister of the Bar-Phukan Nimati alias Laluksola. When the Samaguria Prince was made king by Debera the Raja of Tipam, accompanied by Kachalukhowa Salal Gohain, proceeded with his army to fight the new king and kill Debera. There was a battle at Sengdhari between the armies of the Tipam Raja and Chao Kham-Jang, but the Tipam Raja was defeated and compelled to retreat²⁶⁸ and his men fled away. He and the Salal Gohain were seized and put to death by Debera. Debera also killed as many as

²⁶⁴ AB, pp. 233-235. A list of important persons killed by Debera is given in Assam Buranjī (1648-1681 A.D.), p. 34 and also in AB, as above.

²⁶⁵ Assam Buranjī (1648-1681 A.D.), p. 34 ; AB - 'EMJC' p. 128.

²⁶⁶ AB, p. 233.

²⁶⁷ Assam Buranjī (1648-1681 A.D.), pp. 35-36.

²⁶⁸ AB, p. 236.

fourteen other princes and Chetia Patar, who was engaged by Debera, put to death the Raja of Namrup at his own place.²⁶⁹ With him Ramadhvaj's line is said to have become extinct. Debera followed a ruthless policy of eliminating all his opponents from the scene and wanted to have a free hand in running the administration at his dictates. He employed his agents to perform this job without regard for any law or principle. Thus he sent one Lao Deka with a body of men in the name of the king to Gauhati to ask the Bar-Phukan to send to the capital the dismissed Ghora Konwar Bar-Barua, one Rajkhowa, the brother of Tangsu and his son, Luthuri Rajkhowa and his son, the grandson of Tamulidalo and his son. As they proceeded to Garhgaon they were all put to death at Lentali, or, according to some Assamese Buranjis, at Sariahtali, under the orders of the Bar-Barua,²⁷⁰ which would normally have been ultra-vires.

Seeing that Debera was all-in-all and could order death penalty at his will the chief queen one day said to the king in disgust - 'If you are king, how Lasai (Debera) Barbarua can have so much power. The royal umbrella is at the hand of the Barbarua. If you do not take some measure to do away with him, you will not be able to have supremacy and you will remain mere a puppet at his hand',²⁷¹ This was a significant statement from the mouth of the chief queen which clearly shows that

269 Assam Buranji (1648-1681 A.D.), p.56.

270 AB, pp.236-237 ; PAB, p.151.

271 AB, p.257.

Debera Bar-Barua, as the leader of a strong militant group of his own, seized all power and became the sole dictator and king-maker of the time to the exclusion of all others including the great Gohains. The king realised his position of insignificance before Debera. He became prepared to get rid of this de facto ruler. Debera had to be always on guard for what he was doing and therefore maintained a network of spies. Thus one of the servants of the king secretly informed Debera of what was going on against him at the palace. Debera, then, confined the king in his palace by turning up the ladder. In the month of Dinruk (April-May) in A.D. 1675 he brought in from the village Klingkhang²⁷² Prince Gobar, the son of Chao Abang, the grandson of Deo-Raja and formally made him king at Makna near the Dikhou river. Chao Khan-Jeng was put to death. This king was on the throne for twenty-one days only. Both the chief queen and her brother were also put to death by Debera.

Soon after Gobar's accession Debera Bar-Barua sent one Apak Duari to the Bura-Gohain, who was at Gauhati in charge of the gateway to Upper Assam, asking him to send the Bar-Phukan to the capital. This way of inviting the nobles and officers in distant Lower Assam one by one to be treacherously murdered under Debera's orders, as in the case of the Ghora Konwar Bar-Barua and others who had been called to the capital and put

²⁷² Ibid., In the Assamese Buranjis the name of the place is mentioned as Tungkhang and Tungkhang is known to be the plains area in front of the Charaideo Hill and is to be distinguished from Tingkhang in the Dibrugarh Sub-Division.

to death, acted as a warning to the chief nobles of the kingdom who had come to Sarai Ghat to fight the Mughuls.²⁷³ As the main part of the Ahom army with its veteran generals had to be transferred to Gauhati in connection with the Mughul wars Garhgaon, the metropolis of the kingdom, became militarily weak to cope with any strong insurrectionary force. Debera took full advantage of it with the help of an armed band to rise to power. Though initially he was probably right in fighting the evil influence of the Boiragi, yet the chain of events drove him beyond the limits of justified conduct and soon he turned a danger to the State committing an unending series of bloody acts.

The Bar-Phukan arrested the Kataki sent by Debera. He came to the Bura-Gohain and said that the Bar-Barua 'has made a plot to kill me and you one after the other by this skill'.²⁷⁴ All the Phukans, Rajkhowas and Hazerikas at Gauhati then assembled and requested Banhgahria Bura-Gohain to assume the leadership and proceed to the capital to destroy the Bar-Barua. They all took oath of unity and loyalty to the Bura-Gohain with all solemnity and in the name of Goddess Phura-Tara to liberate the country from the clutches of Debera, the blood-thirsty evil genius. As there

²⁷³ The victors of the Sarai Ghat battle, who continued to stay at the sub-capital Gauhati for the defence of the area of Sarai Ghat-Pandu-Gauhati, were popularly known as the Saraighatias.

²⁷⁴ AD, p. 233.

was none of the king's family now to succeed to the throne they also proposed the name of the Bura-Gohain to assume that office. Having left Gauhati in charge of Guimela Bar-Gohain Phukan, Bura-Gohain Phukan of Charagua, Dihingia Lapet Phukan's son Kamalabaria Amunseng Neog and Gajpuria Kalanola Neog the Bura-Gohain and the Bar-Phukan with their host of Phukans, Rajkhowas, Hazarikas, Saikias and also the Koch princes of the north and south advanced against Debera at Garhgaon. As this formidable force advanced up towards the capital, in Central Assam the Salal Gohain and the Marangikhowa Gohain joined with the Bura-Gohain.

Debera Bar-Barua heard the news of the expedition. In the month of Dinruk (April-May) of A.D. 1675 he collected together all foreign mercenaries (Bangals) to reinforce his own band. He gave them horses and weapons, threw up forts at strategic places and placed his forces all over the area from Dorgaon to Garhgaon. He placed Sengmun Bar-Gohain at Bara-Khova-duar, Akasu Barpatra-Gohain at Banhgarha-duar and he himself was at Mechaghar-duar. General Bura-Gohain was mortified to see foreign foes (Bangals) inside the 'casket of gold' (Assam), while they were going to fight those outside of it. On Debera's side, almost all the top officers, such as Nakjang Phukan who was in charge of Debera's fort, the Pani Phukan at Thura, Asuk Barpatra-Gohain at Banhbari, Nagarial Phukan at the fort Raiphra and others, on whose support he counted, suddenly changed their mind and deserted him. They went over to the side of the Bura-Gohain, who, with his host

of Saraighatias, had come up and encamped at Nandang. Though left with a reduced strength Debera gave a fight at Bankgarah but was vanquished and fled away. The Bar-Phukan engaged the Hazarikas with their men to search him out and arrest him. They combed the area, captured Debera and made him over to the Bar-Phukan.²⁷⁵ Debera's regime collapsed. Debera was put into a pig's cage, his two wives were made to ride on his shoulder and trample him and then he was taken ^{to} Rajahat where he was put to death by hoeing from foot to head.²⁷⁶

With him many of the insurgents of his band were also captured and beheaded. The king made by Debera was deposed and brought away from Haithaguri for his hostility and was confined without food and water till death at Bhogbari²⁷⁷ to the great pleasure of all people who detested him for being a puppet of the Bar-Barua. He reigned for twenty-four days only.

Thereafter the Phukans and other officers desired that the Bura-Gohain should occupy the throne, but the latter declined it on the constitutional ground that 'a minister cannot become king'.²⁷⁸ Then after consultation with the nobles and officers the Bura-Gohain suggested the name of the Prince of Dihing, who was the son of the Namrupia Raja, a descendant of Hso-Hom-Mong or Dihingia Raja and all agreed. He was brought in and made king at Phulbari in A.D. 1675 in the month of Jaistha (May-June) with great pomp.

²⁷⁵ AB, pp.233-241 for details ; AB - 'SMJC', pp.131-132 ; Assam Buranji (1648-1681 A.D.), pp.36-38.

²⁷⁶ Assam Buranji (1648-1681 A.D.), p.38 ; AB - 'SMJC', p.133.

²⁷⁷ AB - 'SMJC', p.132.

²⁷⁸ Ibid., p.132 ; also PAB, p.152.

On ascending the throne the Dihingia Prince assumed the title of Hgo-Jin-Hpa. There was a wholesale change of the old officers of the State who were on the side of Debera. Chao Sheng-Klang, the son of Chapa Barpatra-Gohain of Kenduguria family, was appointed Barpatra-Gohain. Guimela Bar-Gohain's son Laluk was appointed Bar-Gohain. Lanching-Shaiken (Kirkiria), the son of Rangasila, was made Bar-Barua in place of Debera. The son of Fuhuriparia Bura-Gohain was made Farvatia Phukan. Laluk Phukan, who was the grandson of Metekatalia Bar-Gohain, was made Tairai Phukan. Makduna Phukan was made Naoghaliya Phukan. The Bar-Phukan Laluk's brother was appointed Bhitarual Duari Phukan. Lai Barua of Bar-Gohain family was appointed as Raidangia Barua. Tangaou Phukan was replaced by Bhatdhara as Phukan. Rangasila's brother was made Tarua-Dihingia Rajkhowa.²⁷⁹

Within a year dissensions arose in the king's Court. The king's four sons and their friends found that the actual ruler of the kingdom was the Bura-Gohain and the king was only a figure-head with no power to rule the country well. They therefore urged the king to make the Bura-Gohain and his party of nobles to take an oath of loyalty to the king. The chief queen also, in consultation with Lao Barchetia, advised the king to enforce the loyalty of the Bura-Gohain and other Sarai-ghatias by making them take a solemn oath of loyalty, otherwise

²⁷⁹ AB, p. 242 ; AB - 'SMJC', p. 133 1 Assam Buranji (1649-1681 A.D.), p. 39.

'it would have been better to live by cultivation than to live in subordination to others'. The Bura-Gohain was then summoned by the king to an oath-taking ceremony, but he did not come. He prepared for chastising the king for such a step and invited the Barpatra-Gohain to his side, but the latter refused to side with him and said - 'My forefathers never revolted against the king'. The Bar-Gohain Laluk also remained loyal. But Lalithapana Bar-Gohain and the Marangikhowa Gohain joined with the Bura-Gohain. Those who were on the side of the king took the oath, but those who were against assembled at Dergaon and became ready for action. The king requested the Bapus (Gosains) including the Vanamali Bapu to meet the Bura-Gohain and bring about a reconciliation between them, but the Bura-Gohain refused to discuss the matter with the Bapus when the latter went to him. The king also sent the Bar-Gohain, the Barpatra-Gohain and a few other nobles to the Bura-Gohain to make him change his mind, but the latter declined to have any talk on this issue.²⁸⁰ The king was then determined to fight and advanced with his force to Tamulihat and charged the armies of the Bura-Gohain, but was routed.²⁸¹ He escaped to Taimung (Dibing) when under the Bura-Gohain's instructions he was captured and his eyes extracted at Sakbari Mao-shal. It was followed by the king committing suicide in July, 1677, by striking his head against a stone. His body was buried at

²⁸⁰ AB - 'SMJC', p.135.

²⁸¹ According to AB - 'SMJC', (p.135) there was a fight between the king and the Bura-Gohain at the Singha-duar or Lion-Gate of the capital.

Charaideo.

The eldest son of the king fled away. The second son was banished to Namrup by the victors and his eyes were extracted. The two youngest sons were put to death. The Bura-Gohain was again requested by the nobles and officers to be king and take the powers into his hands. This time he asked the Bailung Pandits for their opinion whether it would be in consonance with the principles of Ahom government to do so. The Pandits told him that it would not be proper for him to become king. Then the Bura-Gohain summoned the assembly of the Ministers, Phukans, Baruas and others and announced that - 'I do not belong to the royal family. Had I descended from the royal family, I would not have hesitated to take the title of king. Now I therefore do not wish to be king. I wish to make one of the royal family, king'.²⁸²

At the instance of the Bura-Gohain Prince Chao Kham-Shen, the grandson of Chao Hso-Teng, was brought from Charaideo and raised to the throne in 1677 under the title of Hso-Doi-Hsa, called also Parvati Raja. He married the daughter of the Bura-Gohain and made her his chief queen. The Bar-Phukan's brother Bhatdhara Phukan and Mecha Bar-Barua also gave their daughters in marriage to this king. Soon after his accession he offered presents to the Bar-Phukan and other Phukans and sent them back to Gauhati with other officers and men who earlier came up to the capital to subdue Debera Bar-Barua. Mecha Bar-Barua and the

282 AB, pp. 249-250.

Bura-Gohain remained at Garhgaon. The king also richly rewarded the Bura-Gohain and created for him a permanent landed estate near the Lohit. He then performed the Rikkhan ceremony and worshipped Langkuri (Siva) on the Barpahar Hill and the Ahom gods at Charaideo with offerings of cows and buffaloes.²⁸³

A number of officers were replaced by others. Among them Japang Gohain was made Bar-Gohain by the Bura-Gohain and Kenduguria Barpatra's grandson was given the office of Barpatra-Gohain. Bhatdhara was appointed Phukan and was sent to Sarai Ghat and in his place Kalanchu was made Phukan at Garhgaon. The Bura-Gohain's elder brother was appointed Nao-boicha Phukan by removing Madnukhowa from that post. The former Kirkiria Bar-Barua was replaced by Mecha Bar-Barua and Mecha by Chakrapani, the son of Dihingia Hazarika. Mecha suspected evil for him and fled to Sarai Ghat. Betmela Phukan of Taimung was charged with theft of a gold Taakin (water-pot) by the king. He felt insulted and attempted on the life of the king in one night, killing by mistake the king's mother. In fear of punishment he also fled to Sarai Ghat.²⁸⁴ Those who thus fled to distant Gauhati with grudge and grievance reported to the Bar-Phukan the high-handedness of the Bura-Gohain in the administration of the country. The attempt on the king's life was suspected by the Bura-Gohain to be an act of the Saraighatias, particularly of the dismissed Bar-Barua. This opinion of his reached the ears of the Gauhati officers and

283 AB, p.251 ; AB - 'SMJC', pp.136-137.

284 Ibid., p.252.

a feeling of estrangement developed between the authorities at Garhgaon and the officers at Gauhati.²⁸⁵ What Bura-Gohain did at Garhgaon in dismissing and changing important officers Laluk wanted to do it from Gauhati. Thus the Bar-Phukan, who refused to remain subservient to the Bura-Gohain, appointed his brother Marangi as Bar-Barua and his son Jagara as Pani-Phukan. He appointed Dihingia Lapet Phukan's son Alun to the post of Phukan. He also raised to that post Maupiya and Bandar of Lamakhru family. Marangi was arrested by Mecha Bar-Barua and made a prisoner. Alun Phukan fled from Garhgaon and related everything to the Bar-Phukan at Kaliabar.²⁸⁶ The matters came to such a pass that the Bura-Gohain, after a discussion with his Phukans at the capital, announced the dismissal of the Bar-Phukan Laluksola (Nimati) who had been in this office since the death of Lachit Bar-Phukan. The great Gohains also constructed a stone fort on the Ajang Hill. The king disregarding the advice of many ordered the Bura-Gohain in A.D. 1679 to construct a fort at Chintamani which was named Hungna-garh.²⁸⁷

In the meantime, Laluksola²⁸⁸ heard the news of his dismissal. The fortification at Chintamani became another reason of fear, for the officers at Sarai Ghat thought that it was meant against them. The Bar-Phukan held a council with his brother, Bhatdhar Phukan, and the three brothers of the

285 PAB, pp.153-154 ; AB - 'SMJC', p.139 ;
Kamrupar Buranji, p.99.

286 Arsan Buranji (1643-1681 A.D.), pp.49-50.

287 AB, p.253 ; PAB, p.154.

288 called also 'Burah Phukan'.

Marangikhowa Gohain and after a long discussion decided to seek the aid of Mansur Khan, the Nawab of Bengal in this extremely difficult situation. They despatched two envoys to the Nawab 'with presents of some elephants, maihangs (raised plates), gold embroidered cloths, and gold too'. They first contacted Baduli Phukan and gave him some presents and with his help met the Nawab. The envoys said to the Nawab that the Bar-Phukan asked for about 200 horse and forty war-vessels from him to reach Sarai Ghat as early as possible to fight the Bura-Gohain and that, in return, he would leave the fortifications of Gauhati to be possessed by the Mughuls, if only he was assured of being made king of Assam. The Nawab became sympathetic to the proposal, but could not himself come to a final settlement of such a major issue. He, therefore, directed them to meet 'the Padshah's son' Azam-tara at Dacca'. It may be remembered that 'A'zam-tara or Muhammad 'A'zam married the daughter of Jayadvaj Singha, Nang-Seng alias Ramoni Gabharu or Rabmat Bahu of the Mughul Court as a sequel to Mir Jumla's invasion of Assam and that she was the daughter of Laluk Bar-Phukan's sister, Pakhari, who was the Tamuli Kunwari of the king. As such Laluk became the uncle of 'A'zam-tara. When the Bar-Phukan's proposal was placed before him he agreed to it and promised not only to make his uncle Laluksola ruler of Assam but also to pay four lakhs rupees as a price for handing over Gauhati.²⁸⁹

²⁸⁹ Tungkhungia Buranji, Ed. by Bhuyan (DHAS, Gauhati), 1932, p.9.

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Thus the Bar-Phukan betrayed Gauhati, the main bastion of the kingdom, into the hands of the Mughuls, who took possession of it early in March, 1679, without any sacrifice²⁹⁰ and for this so-called 'conquest'²⁹¹ Muhammad 'A'zam, the viceroy of Bengal, was rewarded by the Emperor.²⁹²

Meanwhile, in order to frustrate the plan of surrendering Gauhati the king despatched an army, ~~to~~ headed by the Dura-Gohain and other officers, to Gauhati when yet the Chintamani garh was not completed. At the same time the Bar-Phukan, undoubtedly strengthened by reinforcements from Bengal, proceeded up to the capital. While the three great Gohains encamped at Visvanath and their advance-guards reached Duimunisila, the Bar-Phukan's army also reached that place. Getting the news of the Bar-Phukan's advance with a strong force the Dura-Gohain's courage failed and so he fled northwards from Visvanath to Lojubaj and from there towards Satsahiya to escape to the hills. But on his way he was captured and brought down to the Bar-Phukan's camp at Duimunisila, where he was put into confinement under strong guards.²⁹³ Laluk Bar-Phukan arrested the Phukans and Hazarikas coming against him and marched to Garbgaon. The king became nervous and fled to the Charaideo Hill and would not come down even though his safety was assured by the Bar-Phukan. The king wanted to excuse himself by openly confessing that

290 Gait : op.cit., p.164. See also AB - 'SMJC', p.140 for date of surrender.

291 Masir-i-Alamsiri (Ed. Bibl. Indica, p.72).

292 Sir Jadunath Sarkar : op.cit., p.190.

293 T.B., p.11.

he was merely a nominal ruler, the real ruler being the Bura-Gohain. He recalled his earlier days when he was happier with his peaceful calling of cultivation than with his burden of kingship. But at last he was persuaded to come down to the capital and allowed to rule as before. The Sarai Ghat officers returned to Kaliabar where they made their head-quarters as Gauhati had now come under the Mughals.

But soon the king entered into a conspiracy against the Bar-Phukan being aggrieved at the loss of Gauhati and the disappearance of the Bura-Gohain on whom he solely depended. He was also intolerant of the appointments to high offices made by the Bar-Phukan over the head of the king. When the plans matured the king declared - 'I make Bhatdhara Bar-Phukan and have removed the Bura (Laluk)' and he also arrested Marangi, whom the Bar-Phukan appointed as the Bar-Barua. Soon Marangi escaped from prison at Garhgaon and reported everything to the Bar-Phukan. The latter proceeded to Garhgaon and arrested the king.²⁹⁴

Then the Bura Phukan Laluk brought in a Prince, called Saru-Gohain, belonging to the Samaguria royal family and aged only fourteen years. He was installed as king in November, 1679. From his tender age the young king became known as Lara Raja, or 'Boy King'. On his accession he assumed the ~~title~~ name of Neo-Lik-Hpa and the Hindu name of Ratnadhvaj Singha,²⁹⁵ but

²⁹⁴ Ibid, pp.11-12.

²⁹⁵ TB., 9.12 ; Gait : 92, cit., p.164.

he was more popular as Lara Raja. He was a disciple of Chota Vanamali Rapu of Dakshinpat Vaishnava Satra.

His immediate task was to deal with the opponents. Hso-Doi-Hpa was executed. The Bura-Gohain's sons were arrested and sent to Talmung and were soon afterwards impaled to death at the house of the Bura-Gohain at Bankbari²⁹⁶ and the Bura-Gohain himself was put to death at Kuliabar on the second waxing day of Aghan (Nov.-Dec.), 1679. His brother Naoboicha Phukan, his nephew and son Lon-Kham were also executed at the same place.²⁹⁷ Langi Gohain of Pukhuriparia Bura-Gohain family was then appointed Bura-Gohain. Jabang Bar-Gohain was dismissed and his properties attached and Lalthapang Bar-Gohain, of Maduri, was appointed to the post vacated by Jabang.²⁹⁸

At about this time an envoy named Govindaram, sent by Muhammad 'A'zam, arrived at the capital with a letter asking the Burah Phukan Laluk to despatch to Beagal the king and the three great Gohains and other enemies as prisoners, assuring him, at the same time, that he would be made king of Assam and the Burah Phukan received him at his residence at Meteka in a right royal style putting on robes and ornaments worn by kings.

It was suggested to the king by the Bar Deodhai (chief priest)²⁹⁹ that human sacrifices should be offered to the Goddess at Sadiya to remove the miseries of the kingdom.

²⁹⁶ AB, p. 253.

²⁹⁷ TB, p. 12.

²⁹⁸ AB, pp. 253, 260.

²⁹⁹ It seems he was the chief priest of the Tamresvari Temple of Sadiya.

The king asked the Burah Phukan to find out a man to be offered as sacrifice. The Bar-Phukan selected for the purpose one of his attendants named Bhotai from Nowgong who possessed both a good physique and bravery. When Bhotai became aware of it he, in association with two other friends named Madhav Tamuli and Aghona Kachari, murdered the Burah Phukan at night in November, 1680.³⁰⁰ According to another version (Kamrupar Buranji, p.101) the Burah Bar-Phukan became so overbearing and arrogant that most of the nobles and officers conspired to get rid of his dominance. They employed Bhotai to assassinate him and the latter did it according to plan. The king then appointed Bandar of Lammakhru family, a disciple of Chota Vanamali Bapu, as the next Bar-Phukan and Dihingia Alan as Bar-Barua. Bhotai is said to have remained careful after the assassination of the Burah Phukan, but he was captured and kept under detention as a dangerous element and later his nose and ears were chopped off and his eyes put out.

It is said that Laluk Burah Phukan, hoping to become king with Muslim support, 'pursued the ruthless plan of mass-oring all able-bodied princes', principally for his own security when he would become king. His main target of attack was Gadapani of the Tungkhungia royal family. Chronicles give no names of the

300 According to the Tai-Ahom text (AB, p.250) it were the Phukans and Baruas, all king's party, who killed both the Bar-Phukan Laluk and his body-guard Phatai (Bhotai). They also put to death Laluk's three sons and two brothers. It must have been the result of a big plot arising from the past actions of Laluk. Bhatdhara Phukan, the third brother of Laluk, fled to Faujdar Mansur-Khan's place at Gauhati when the Garhgao officers proceeded to seize him at Kaliabar.

other princes, murdered mutilated. It is doubtful whether it was a general hunt for massacring princes or simply an attempt to capture the most powerful rival, Gadapani only, who was feared. The latter appears to be the truth. Gadapani was the son of Gobar and as such, had a good claim to the throne and he was also a prince of extra-ordinary physical vigour, ability and courage. Spies were employed after him for his capture, but he left his home at Tungkhong down the Charaideo Hill and roamed about in cognito.³⁰¹ In the meantime, while yet the Muslim promise to make him king was to be fulfilled, the Burah Phukan was put to death by his enemies. Gadapani removed his two sons, Lai and Leshai, to a Naga village in the hills for protection and he himself spent a period of time among the Nagas from whom he got good reception. Behind his back his wife, Jaymati, is said to have been captured and tortured to death under the orders of Lara Raja.³⁰² As it was meaningless to waste his days in the hills he came down to contact his friends for enlisting support. On the advice of Garhgenya Handikoi-Phukan and Pelan Bar-Barua's son, the Saringia Phukan,

301 The version in Harakanta's Buranji (p.56) that during his wanderings in cognito he lived for some days at Chandkuchi in Kamrup and then lived at Rani on the south bank is unacceptable. Kamrup with Gauhati was then in Muslim occupation and the Muslims were the friends of Laluksola Bar-Phukan and enemies of Gadadhar and his supporters. It was Gadadhar who liberated Kamrup from the Muslims. This part of the story is not there in Kashinath's Buranji, which Harakanta rewrote with a few additions here and there, nor is it there in any other Buranji.

302 Jaymati is said to be the daughter of Laithapana Bar-Gohain. Her Ahom name is not to be found in any extant Buranji. Her story is variously told and only casually referred to in two or three Assamese Buranjis, such as Harakanta's Bura (p.54) and Tungkhungia Buranji (p.14) and probably in one Ms. There is no reference to her in the published Tai-Ahom text. More remarkable is that nothing is said about her in Kashi Buranji.

he went to the Satra of Dakshinpatia Chota Vanamali Bapu at Kalabari and requested the Gosain to acquaint Bandar Bar-Phukan, the Gosain's disciple, with his plan and policy and get him to his side, but the Gosain refused to comply with Gadapani's request in the interest of his disciple Lara Raja and even did not allow him to stay inside the Satra and treated him as an ordinary man. He received a similar treatment from Keshavdev Bapu of Auniati Satra where a resident disciple, chewing betel-nut, spat towards him (Gadadhar) which spoiled his garment. But the Prince was amazed to see the vast wealth and splendour of the great Satras and of the resident bhakats (disciples) and their gradation of functionaries and workers. The Gosains had everything of a king including the royal ornaments except only the Kekura-dola (royal palanquin) and elephants. He witnessed this in the Dakshinpat, Auniati and other Satras.

Getting no support and sympathy from the Gosains he again contacted the Garhganya Handikoi-Phukan and the Saringia Phukan at Kaliabar and related to them all about his experiences in the Satras. The two Phukans then took up ^{the} cause of the fugitive Prince and met the Bar-Phukan to plead for him. They succeeded in winning his support for Gadapani. At this time, apprehending the return of Bhatdhara with a force to attack Assam, most of the nobles and officers came down from Garhgaon to Kaliabar to fight the Bangals at Gauhati. When they all assembled at Kaliabar a feeling of dissatisfaction with the weak king, Lara Raja, was visible among all. 'How'

an incapable king', said they, 'protect the kingdom ? He can protect the kingdom only if he is capable'.³⁰³ They held a council and seriously discussed this vital issue and all agreed to support Prince Gadapani in the greater interest of the country.

29. Hso-Pat-Hpa alias Gadadhar Singha (1681-1696) :

All the nobles and officers that assembled at Kaliabar formally performed the installation ceremony of making Gadapani their king in August 1681 on a Thursday. Thus they revolted against Lara Raja whom they wanted to remove from the throne for his incapacity to govern the country well and efficiently. They then sailed up the Brahmaputra ^{to} Garhgaon with their Tungkhungia king under the leadership of Bandar Bar-Phukan. When this news reached Chota Vanamali Gosain he became worried. He came down and met the Bar-Phukan and requested him not to proceed for making Gadadhar king.³⁰⁴ 'You are my chief desciple', said the Gosain, 'and you know, Lara Raja is also my desciple ; as such I am myself virtually reigning as the king, hence you do not do such a thing ; I beg of you the rule of the kingdom'.³⁰⁵ The Bar-Phukan could not oblige the Gosain as it was not a single man's affair nor was it in the true interest of the country. The

303 TB, pp. 14-15 ; PAB, p. 156.

304 Ibid., p. 15.

305 K.T.P. : pp. 44-45. In this context the event of Jaymati's death, said to be under prolonged tortures, unprecedented in the history of the Ahoms, will be a subject, about which further research is likely to bring to light startling facts.

Gosain was extremely displeased and the talks ended by mutual cursing.³⁰⁶ The Bar-Phukan's party then advanced and reached Garhgaon in one week's time. Lora Raja was removed from the throne and banished to Namrup where he was put to death. Gadapani ascended the throne by building a Singari-Ghar at Barkola³⁰⁷ and assumed the name of Chao Hso-Pat-Hpa and the Hindu name Gadadhar Singha. He made his capital at Barkola which is close to Garhgaon.

Final Recovery Of Gauhati :

His immediate act was to equip an army and send it to recover Gauhati under the commands of Dilihiyal Langi Bura-Gohain, Salal Gohain, Dihingia Alun Bar-Barua and a few others. By the first assault Bankbari was captured and with great expedition Kajali on the south bank was occupied. The Muslims retreated, but their fleet with big boats became prepared to meet the Ahom navy at the mouth of the Bar Nadi. The Ahoms came down upon the Muslim fleet, attacked it furiously and won a great naval victory. The Muslims fled away in small boats leaving behind their fleet and war materials. Dihingia Alan Bar-Barua took Itakhuli by defeating Mansur Khan at Sukreswar in A.D. 1633. The Faujdar then fled away leaving Gauhati at the mercy of the Ahoms, who pursued the Mughuls down to the Manaha. The whole of Kamrup was thus recovered finally. Never in any previous war so large an amount of booty was captured as in this one

306 E.T.P.: op.cit., p.45.

307 Ibid., p.46 ; Gait : op.cit., p.166.

and the booty consisted of brass cannon, iron guns, money, ~~maxima~~ horses, camels, bullocks, buffaloes and other articles. All these were sent to the king who distributed them among his officers.³⁰⁸ Bhatdhara Phukan, who had earlier gone over to the side of the Muslims and incited them to invade Assam, did not get much response. He later came back to his country in disappointment. He was captured with his son and both were put to death.

This was the last war with the Muslims, who never again ventured to invade Assam and the Manaha was accepted by both sides as boundary.

Gait refers to three cannon in existence of which one is in the Indian Museum, one at Dikom and the third outside the house of the Deputy Commissioner of Lakhimpur, which bear the following inscription :- 'King Gadadhar Singha, having vanquished the Musalmans at Gauhati, obtained this weapon in 1604 sak (1682 A.D.).'³⁰⁹

Controlling Revolts And Conspiracies :

The kingdom was not free from intrigues and conspiracies because of the influences of rival parties. It was unfortunate that Bandar Bar-Phukan, the main pillar of strength and support to King Gadadhar, and the Pani-Phukan became rebellious against the king. They were brought to Garhgaon on a charge of grave offence and made to stand trial by the three

³⁰⁸ TD, p.17 ; K.T.P. : p.46 ; AB - 'SMJC', pp.146-148 for details about the disposition of the Ahom Forces at Gauhati.

³⁰⁹ Gait : op.cit., p.167.

great Gohains of the Court in the fore-chamber of the Holong (great Council Hall). They were found guilty, but the three great Gohains and other high officers prayed for their mercy for the first time which the king granted. But the king dismissed them both from their posts and appointed Handikoi Neog as Bar-Phukan and Bheba as Phukan in their places. There were fresh conspiracies against the king by four Phukans, namely Chengrai Phukan, Khamrak Phukan, Khamsin Phukan and Pani-Phukan. After necessary enquiries the main ring-leaders, Chengrai and Khamrak, were executed and the other two were excused. He dismissed the Pani-Phukan and appointed Tungkhangia Dula-kakharia Barua as Pani-Phukan. Once again the dismissed Pani-Phukan revolted and this time he was executed at Rajahat.³¹⁰ Another officer to revolt against the king was Saringia Phukan, but the Phukan had ultimately to seek the protection of Handikoi Bar-Phukan for safety. The Bar-Phukan said - 'the king only reforms (the offender) after trial. Don't fear, no danger'. In the trial evidences were such that the Saringia Phukan was granted the benefit of doubt, particularly when the Bar-Phukan spoke for him.³¹¹ The king appointed Kunoiganya Mau Gohain as Bura-Gohain by removing Langi Bura-called also Dighala Bura-Gohain, Gohain, who was executed for the offence of giving shelter to the prince of Diroi ~~who had also given shelter to the prince~~. After Mau Gohain Khampeng of Lankakia family was made Bura-Gohain. Achuk became Barpetra-Gohain and Laithapana of Maduri Bar-Gohain with the

310 IB, pp.19, 22.

311 AB - 'SMJC', pp.148-151.

office of Rajmantri. Tema of Lahar family was appointed Bar-Barua.³¹² He also made a number of other changes among his officers.

Controlling Troublesome Neighbours :

King Gadadhar subdued the Miris of Sadiya who raided the house of Rup Handikoi and set fire to it causing death to his children and also killed two hundred subjects of the king. He also brought to submission the Latha Nagas of Mamchang who had raided the king's territory killing a number of men by sending an expedition against them. The ring-leader, Latha Khunbao, was captured and punished with death on the bank of the Jamuna stream. This Naga trouble was followed by another in the direction of the Dayang river area. A force was sent against the Dayang Nagas under the command of Tanseng Phukan. The Nagas were defeated and submitted to the king by offering two Naga princesses. The Phukan delivered the princesses to the king, who then forgave the Nagas and made presents to them.³¹³

Religious Policy :

King Gadadhar himself was free from any religious bigotry, but he saw the danger to the State from the great concentration of wealth and power in the hands of the priesthood. The great Gosains and Mahantas gathered round them all the luxuries and paraphernalia of the king and the ministers and

³¹² K.T.P. : op.cit., p.45.

³¹³ TB, pp.23, 25-26.

were able to control to a great extent the temporal affairs of the State. He lost faith in a religious system which could permit the heads of the Satra (Vaishnav monasteries) and the celibate disciples, resident in them, to indulge in such earthly luxuries. The king himself was the witness to all these during his days of adversity. He also remembered that while as a fugitive he was at Dakshinpat, in an altercation the Deka Gosain of the Satra had insulted him with abusive language. The Gosain also opposed his candidature to the throne and he sailed down from his Satra by the Lohit to ask the Phukans to remove him from kingship. At Visvanath the king, sighting the Deka Gosain's boat, sent his men to request him to come and bless, but the latter refused to come.³¹⁴ With all these bitter reminiscences Gadadhar ~~Gadadhar~~ was determined to do something with this class of religious preceptors.

The Bhandari Barua, Bezdaloi Rangacharan, complained to the king - 'why should gold and silver be necessary in the houses of bhakats (devotees) ? What they want is the katha³¹⁵ of rice only and that, too, is offered by the sebaits and initialed. If the Svargadev orders, I can bring their wealth in gold and silver'.³¹⁶ The king felt it to be a just view and permitted the Bhandari Barua to confiscate all such wealth with the help of Chaudangs.³¹⁷ He seized the gold idol of Dakshinpat, which Gadadhar had seen during his stay as a fugitive at that place, and also put out the eyes of Ram Gosain of

314 TB, p.26.

315 the daily ration of ten guthis or about half a seer.

316 TB, p.28.

317 policemen of those days.

the Satra as a punishment for his previous offence.³¹⁸ The idol was melted down and made into a dome and fitted on the head of the temple on the hill (Charaideo). The Auniati Gosain was banished to Sadiya after confiscating his properties and the idol of Govinda Thakur was also ordered to be thrown away into the waters of the Lohit. It is said that the real Thakur was concealed, only an imitation Thakur was so thrown into the Lohit at Changinighat.³¹⁹ Fearing that the Hindus would spoil the country by propagating their various cults, Gadadhar removed the Mahantas from the central parts of the country and settled them at out-of-the-way localities such as Namrup, Tokolai, Cheuni and Bacha.³²⁰ The Maghis were fined and transferred to Cheuni. As ordered by the king the Bhandari then set fire to the deserted Satras.³²¹ Gadadhar's policy in this had political reasons behind and not guided by any sectarian ~~motives~~ motive.

Among his public works were the construction of a stone bridge at Dijoi Khana, excavation of the Rahdoi tank, the raising of the Dol Ali with a stone bridge over it, the Akar Ali, Dhodar Ali, and the Alis raised by Dihingia Bar-Barua and Halau Phukan. He also constructed the Khara-dol and the Khara-gark and the Gota-dol with a tank at Charaideo. At Gauhati he made the temple of Umananda-Devalay.³²² It is to be noted that he introduced the system of detailed survey and measurement of

318 reference is to the insult to Prince Gadadhar by the Deka Gosain.

319 IB, p.27.

320 K.T.P. : op.cit., p.46.

321 IB, p.27.

322 K.T.P. : op.cit., pp.46-47 ; H.S.B. : op.cit., p.60.

land. For surveying work of the country surveyers were imported from Koch Behar and Bengal. It was commenced in Sibsagar and extended to other parts of the country, but could not be completed before his death. Gait says that the method of survey was probably the same as that which was in vogue when Assam was first occupied by the British, that is, 'the area of each field was calculated by measuring the four sides with a nal or bamboo pole, 12 feet long, and, multiplying the mean length by the mean breadth'. The unit of the area was the pura, which contained four standard Bengali bighas.³²³ Gadadhar died on Tuesday of 14 Falgun (last week of February) of sak 1617 (A.D. 1696)³²⁴ after a reign of about fourteen years and a half.

An Estimate Of Gadadhar :

Gadadhar Singha, called also Durah Raja as he ascended throne at an advanced age, was the greatest king of the later Ahom period and was undoubtedly the greatest among the rulers of the Tungkhungia Dynasty. The Tungkhungia Buranji (p.5) seems to indicate that he was the third king of his dynasty, one with a short-lived career preceding Gobar. King Gadadhar's immediate successors flourished only on the stability to which he restored the kingdom from a precarious state of chaos and internal divisions by driving off the external foe for good from the territory of Kamrup and by suppressing the internal

³²³ K.T.P. : op.cit., p.46 ; Gait : op.cit., pp.170-171.

³²⁴ IB, p.27 ; K.T.P. : op.cit., p.47.

trouble-makers and evil influences with wonderful tact, vigour and foresight. He was a god-send at a moment when the country was fast going to ~~wreck~~^{wreck} and ruin under feeble monarchs set up by ambitious nobles.

He was hundred per cent Ahom inheriting the blood and vigour of his great ancestors. He possessed a towering personality before which all others looked like pigmies. It left a mark in history around which legends, good and bad, were woven by different sections of the later generations. As an administrator he was always just and fair, never punishing an offender at his whim in a fit of anger. He would either punish or pardon only after a regular trial of which the Chronicles have given a number of historic instances.

Being surrounded by hardy and autonomous races of people and threatened constantly by the mighty Mughuls at the western gate of the kingdom, Gadadhar was opposed to all such influences, religious and social, as were likely to undermine the health, strength and unity of the nation. He believed that the sectarian influence of Hinduism, which fundamentally changed for the worse the food and social habits of the proselytes, would lead to physical and consequent mental deterioration of the nation and therefore disfavoured it. He followed the traditional Ahom religion and way of life and of the Hindu religion he preferred Saktaism to Vaishnavism as more liberal and closer in several respects to the religion of the Ahoms. He abolished the Neo-Vaisnava Satras but built the temple of

Umananda,³²⁵ a centre of Tantric worship. Just before his death king Gadadhar called his two sons to his side and nominated the elder one to succeed him and asked the younger to obey the elder. In the interest of the kingdom he advised his elder son not to indulge in dance, music and Bahari Sen sport and be attached too much to religion at the cost of kingly duties. He also warned him against relying mainly on the priestly class in matters of administration.³²⁶ He probably realized the fatal mistake of Udayaditya in this respect which drove the country to the throes of a revolution. Gadadhar's political wisdom proved itself in later history.

30. Hso-Khrung-Hya alias Rudra Singha (1696-1714) :

On the death of Gadadhar Singha his elder son Lai Gohain ascended the throne on the 14th Falgun, A.D. 1696 and assumed the Ahom name of Chao Hso-Khrung-Hya and the Hindu name Rudra Singha. One of his first acts was to bring back the Gosains and Thakuria Mahantas from Namrup, Cheuni and other places and settle them respectively in the original localities. His first Bura-Gohain was Lankekia Khampeng already appointed by Gadadhar. He was later succeeded by Kunciganya Laisheng and Dillihiyal Aphua Khampat as Bura-Gohains. Kenduguria Sengkhong was appointed Barpatra-Gohain and Rajmantri and on the death of

³²⁵ H.S.B. : op.cit., p.60 ; Duranji-riveka-ratna (Ms. DNAS) compiled by Maniram Dewan (A.D. 1838), Part II, p. 142-B ; Gait : op.cit., p.170.
³²⁶ H.S.B., Ms., p.142-B.

Laithapana his son Kamalakanta became Bar-Gohain. During his reign there were as many as four Bar-Baruas successively, namely, Burah of Dihingia family, Kota of Patar family, Deka of Dihingia family and Baragi of Handikoi family. Handikoi Bar-Phukan continued to hold his office for a long time and was succeeded by Elder Duara and Patar one after the other.³²⁷

Shairing still continued to be a hot-bed of conspiracies. In 1697 in the month of Bhadra (August-September) the Shairing Raja Long-Tyaoek in collusion with the Sungi Barua made a plot against the king, but they were arrested and the Sungi Barua was executed at Namrup. One Mechagharua Demodar (king's) Phukan made a false report to the king that his/brother Leshai Sarujana Gohain was conspiring to overthrow him and seize the throne and in this his associates were Handikoi Bhitaraual Phukan, Lanmakharu Bandar Naoboicha Phukan, Bailung Deka Phukan and a few others. Without proper investigation the/king arrested Leshai, put out one of his eyes and confined him in a jungle and ordered the execution of his associates except the three Phukans. Later when the king learnt that the allegation against his brother, Leshai, was false he became aggrieved for his action. He, however, made amends for his wrong by making him Namrupiya Raja with full dignity and paraphernalia of royalty. In his death-bed injunction to his sons/~~the~~ king confessed that by 'listening to the suggestions of enemies, I drove away the younger (brother). I now perceive my error'.³²⁸

327 K.T.P.: op.cit., pp.47-48.

328 T.B., pp.28-29 ; H.S.B.: op.cit., pp.63-64 ; Wade : op.cit., p.136.

Kachar And Jayanta Expeditions :

The most important event of Rudra Singha's reign was the war with the Kacharis. The Kachari Raja Viradarpanarayan was succeeded by his son Gaduradhvaj. He was a contemporary of Gadadhar Singha. The two kings could not establish friendship between them. Makaradhvajnarayan and Udayadityanarayan, who became Rajas successively after Gaduradhvaj, also failed to make friendship with the Ahoms. Tamradhvajnarayan, who succeeded Udayadityanarayan and who was a contemporary of the Ahom king, Rudra Singha, initiated, through diplomatic channels, a new ^{restoring} ^{of old} move for good relations with Assam, but the manner of approach appeared objectionable to the Ahom authorities.³²⁹ The road for Kachari Katakis was through Raha, where they were to contact the Ahom officer-in-charge of the Raha chauki and the latter was to inform the Bar-Phukan at Gauhati about the matter, who, in his turn, forwarded it to the king for his orders.

As there was no more a Muslim invasion and Tamradhvaj³³⁰ demanded territories up to Mahang, Rudra Singha wanted to invade the Kachari country, from which raiding parties created troubles from time to time in the frontier territory. He assembled the Lower Assam and Upper Assam forces at Visvanath and in December, 1706 sent one division by the Dhansiri route under the command of Panidihingia Dekabarua (Deka Bar-Barua) and another division by the Kapili route with Phulbarua's grandson Beni-Phukan to invade Kachari territory.³³¹ The Ahom armies were

329 KB, pp. 59-60.

330 His name is given as Jay Singha in TB, p. 31.

331 KB, pp. 70-71 ; TB, p. 32.

reinforced, among others, by Miri soldiers who proved their mettle by overpowering the Nagas who took the side of the Kacharis.³³² The Kacharis were driven off from Lenguria and the Bar-Barua occupied Maibang. The king ordered the Ahom generals to advance to Khaspur and occupy it. There was some delay on their part in being prepared to march upon Khaspur for two reasons - one was the difficulty of the route and the other was that most of the army and a number of officers including the Bar-Barua himself fell ill in the unhealthy hilly areas which were full of jungles. There was, in addition, a difficulty in the supply of provisions. But the king wanted them to proceed at once and occupy Khaspur. The Phukens made their march and encamped at Sampani where a fort was made. From that post an envoy named Nilambar was sent by the Chaudang Barua to the Kachari king demanding his submission. At this time the Bar-Barua died at the Gelemu fort and the Chaudang Barua also received no reply for eight days. Hearing the plight of the Ahom armies and their Generals the king ordered them ~~to return~~ to return. In 1708 in the month of Ashin (September-October) king Rudra Singha learnt from the Kacharis visiting Garhgaon to pay homage to him that the Jayanta Raja, Ram Singha, instigated the Kachari Raja to unite with him to attack Garhgaon. But soon a difference arose and taking advantage of the helplessness of Tamradhvaj the Jayanta Raja invaded Khaspur and captured the king and his son and removed them to his capital.

332 KB, p.94.

of
 He boasted his power before an Ahom king's Boiragi who was staying at Jayantapur on way back from Sylhet. Tamradhvaj, a captive at Jayantapur, made his submission to the Ahom king before the Boiragi in a confidential talk between them and prayed for Ahom help. The king then sent an expedition against Jayanta in 1709, he himself advancing to a camp at Misa in Nowgong. One division of the army consisting of the Garhganyas proceeded by the Kapili river with Baragi Bar-Barua in command and a second division, manned by the Saraighatias and commanded by the Bar-Phukan, marched up by the Gobha road. Jayanta Raja Ram Singha prepared to fight but his officers refused to face the powerful Ahom army. Ram Singha surrendered. The army returned triumphantly with the Kachari and the Jayanta Rajas as captives. The two hill Rajas were brought to Rangpur where they paid their homage to the Svarga Maharaja Rudra Singha. Raja Ram Singha died at Rangpur where he was duly cremated. Two years after that king Rudra Singha placed Ram Singha's eldest son on the Jayanta throne as his vassal. The Kachari Raja was given presents and allowed to return to his country.³³³

King Rudra Singha's last great enterprise was a preparation for the conquest of Bengal. His object was to bring within his kingdom all the territories ever conquered by his great predecessors, such as Hso-Hom-Mong and Jayadhvaj Singha. According to the Tripura Buranji (pp.1-19, 91-99) and also Wade's Account (p.131) king Rudra Singha, after subjugating

333 See KB, pp. 59-113 and JB, pp. 63-121 for details.
 Also TB, pp. 31-34 and H.S.D. : op.cit., p. 63.

Jayanta and Kachar but before starting for invading Bengal, sent envoys with letters from him in the name of the Bar-Phukan to the Rajas and Zamindars of Tripura, Koch Behar, Panga, Rangpur, Nadia, Burdwan, Maurang and Barnagar of Bengal intimating them his claim upon the territories as far west as the Karatoya river as they were in the past a part of the Ahom dominions. He also appealed to their religious sense as Hindu rulers, whose religion had been spoiled by the Muslims, to unite in a common effort to conquer the Muslims for the protection of the religion. The letters addressed to them contained, among others, these words - 'Do not prove inimical to us. If we remain friendly everything will succeed. Be yours the Countries, the Government and the Revenue ; mine the name. Act in a manner to preserve peace. Fear not our approach ; send friendly answers respecting your welfare without delay'. The envoys returned with satisfactory answers. King Rudra Singha for the first time established friendship with Suvamsarai of Dacca through Tarkavagish Bhattacharyya and Ratnakandali and with Raja Ratnamanikya of Tripura through Anandiram Medhi. Since then embassies continued to be exchanged between Tripura under the reigns of Ratnamanikya, Mahendramanikya and Dharmamanikya and Assam.

The Ahom king then finalized the plan of invasion in consultation with his ministers - Kamalakanta Bar-Gohain, Kunwoiganya Phukan Bura-Gohain and Kenduguria Deka Barpatra-Gohain. They said that due to the neglect and inaction of the Ahoms these territories had passed into the possession of the

enemies. The Phukens and Baruas of the king offered their services for the conquest of Bengal right down to Dacca. The forces were trained up and equipped for the purpose. The Kachari and Jayanta Rajas joined his army with their contingents of 14,000 and 10,000 men respectively and, in addition, 600 Daflas, who acknowledge his authority, came down from the hills north of the Darrang district.³³⁴ In due course Rudra Singha proceeded in person to Gauhati where he made his camp and got ready a very large army and a powerful fleet. But, as he was preparing to march, he fell ill and died after eight days on a Sunday in the last week of August, 1714 leaving behind five sons - Siva Singha, Pramatta Singha, Mohanmala Gohain, Rajesvar Singha and Lakshmi Singha in order as known in history. Chongrung Buranji's date (sak 1663) about it seems to be based on a wrong calculation.

His Works :

He excavated at Rangpur, just across the Dikhou river on the west of the present town of Sibsagar, the greatest tank in Assam, called Jaysagar,³³⁵ in A.D. 1697 in the month of Agrekhana (November-December). It took forty-five days to complete the work of excavation. The tank was formally consecrated

³³⁴ Gait : op.cit., pp.180-181 ; Wade : op.cit., pp.132-133.
³³⁵ 'The tank comprises an area of 313 acres of land including its four banks, out of which an area of 155 acres was under water. The length of the tank from east to west (both sides) is 533 'Beau', equivalent to 1 mile 2 furlongs 152 yards, and from north to south (both sides) 536 'beau' equivalent to 1 mile 1 furlong 164 yards. Thus the perimetre of the tank is 2 miles 4 furlongs and 96 yards. An earthen pipe line runs from this tank to the Rangpur Palace which is about one mile from it, for supplying water to the Royal Palace'. Extract supplied by Shri B.C. Handique who translated it from an old Buranji.

in the month of Falgun in the same year. In the next Falgun (A.D. 1698) the construction of three dols³³⁶ was commenced. Near the north bank of the tank the king's residence was built. In the month of January, 1701, the three dols, with the images of Vishnu, Keshavrai, Siva, Durga, Ganesha, Suryya and others placed in them, were dedicated. Thereafter the king made the city his capital and named it Rangpur.³³⁷ The city buildings were made of bricks under the supervision of an artizan, named Ghanashyam, imported from Koch Behar. The same artizan also constructed some of the brick temples and houses at Charaideo. When the works were completed the artizan was richly rewarded and permitted to go. But on the point of departing a document, containing a full account of the country and its inhabitants, was accidentally found in his possession. It was apparently meant to betray the Ahoms to the Mughuls. It being a treasonable offence, Ghanashyam was arrested and executed.³³⁸

Capital At Rangpur (A.D. 1707) :

On the 18th day of Ashvin (October), A.D. 1707, King Rudra Singha formally entered his new capital Rangpur, which was just a fortress of bricks and masonry, and occupied his palace.³³⁹

Parvatis Gosain From Bengal :

Svargadev Rudra Singha became a disciple of Haridev

336 dol is a brick or stone temple, dome-shaped, round and tapering upwards and resembling more or less those of the sikhara type in outline.

337 TD, p.29 ; Wade : op.cit. p.122.

338 Gait : op.cit., pp.171-172.

339 Wade : op.cit., p.122.

Adhikari of the Auniati Satra and gave him all manner of material help to rebuild the Satra. Contrary to his father's injunction he became more and more attached to religion and, not satisfied with Haridev, brought in a famous Gosain of the Sakta line named Krishnaram or Krishnananda Nyaya-vagish Tengramara Bhattacharyya from Simlagram in Santipur of Nadia district in Bengal. The Gosain, at his wish, was provided with a residence at Kamakhya on the Nilachal Hill, from which he was called Parvatiya Gosain. The king asked for mantra or mystic formula of religion from the Gosain, but the latter sent it in the writing in the hand of a Brahmin. He did not present it directly as, from the orthodox view-point of the Hindus, the king was thought to be of low origin by reason of his race. The king understood it and refused to accept the mantra from the hand of the Brahmin, but the Gosain was allowed to live on the hill.³⁴⁰ He, however, permitted his son, Siva Singha, to accept the Gosain as his Guru. Rudra Singha's excessive leaning towards Hinduism and foreign ways to the neglect of his ancestral religion and culture evoked curses on him from the Ahom Deodhai and Bailing Pandits.

Miscellaneous Affairs :

He is also said to have introduced foreign styles of dress and ornaments in the country. The dhoti, the coat and the turban were innovations of his time. The nobles started putting on new dress since then.

340 H.S.B. : op.cit., p.67.

The religious question whether a sudra could initiate a Brahmin was settled at a Mahajan³⁴¹ conference at Garhgaon. The decision after consultation of sastras was that nowhere it was found in the sastras that a sudra was authorized to initiate a Brahmin and the king accordingly enforced it.

There was, in A.D. 1677, a severe earthquake which continued to produce shocks for six months from Falgun to Shravan causing mountains to fall to pieces and throwing up sand and fish to the surface.

In addition to the Jaysagar tank and its dols he also constructed the Rangnath-dol and Fakua-dol and also the Rangpur city in Meteka. Further he constructed a stone bridge at Namdang and two such bridges at Dimau and raised the Kharikatiya-Ali, Dubariani-Ali and Meteka-Ali.³⁴² He imported many artificers from Bengal, established numerous schools for Brahmins and sent Brahmin boys for studying in the centres of Sanskrit learning in Bengal. Gadadhar's unfinished land survey works were resumed and the districts of Sibsagar and Nowgong were surveyed. The territory of the kingdom from the eastern extremity to Khagarijan in the present Nowgong district was under the administration of the Bar-Barua and from Khagarijan westwards including the original areas called Nogaon, Kharangi and also obviously Raha the whole territory up to the Manaha formed the jurisdiction of the Bar-Phukan - (Deodhai Buranji, p.130).

³⁴¹ religious preceptor, a Satradhikar.

³⁴² K.T.P. : op.cit., p.48.

All hill tribes submitted to the Ahom authority and trade with Tibet was promoted.³⁴³

31. Hso-Tan-Hpa alias Siva Singha (1714-1744) :

On the death of Rudra Singha his eldest son, Barjana Gohain, who was at Gauhati with his father, sailed up with the dead body of the deceased king and ascended the throne at Rangpur. The dead body was embalmed at Chunpura for a fortnight and, according to Changrung Phukanar Buranji, entombed in the month of Kartik and not cremated as some accounts say. In the month of Falgun (February-March) the Barjana Gohain ascended the Singari-Ghar and assumed the Ahom name Hso-Tan-Hpa and the Hindu name Siva Singha.³⁴⁴

His Bura-Gohains were successively Bailungia Bayan, Domai Gohain and Sengmun of Pukhuriparia family. Kamalakanta continued to be the Bar-Gohain who was also made the Rajmantri after Paramananda Bar-Gohain, who had succeeded his father Kenduguria Sengkan as Rajmantri with the office of Barpatra-Gohain. On his death Harinath of Kalugaon, younger brother of queen Phuleswari, was appointed Bar-Gohain and Rajmantri when she became 'Bar-Raja'. He was later made Barpatra Gohain with the office of Rajmantri which was until then held by Kamalakanta, as Thanunath of Dihingia phoid (clan or family) was appointed Bar-Gohain. The office of Bar-Barua was held first by Bura Dadai, probably Baragi of Handikoi family, and then by Rup-chandra of Bakatha. Bijoy Tarun Duara, Debera of Dihingia family

³⁴³ Gait : op.cit., pp.181-182.

³⁴⁴ TE, p.37 ; K.T.P. : op.cit., p.49.

and Bijoy's son Deka Duara became successively Bar-Phukan.³⁴⁵

His Queens : Growing Influence Of Sakta Priests :

The private life of the king was not quite chaste. He admitted into his chamber his nurse who was the daughter of one Lakhtakia Koch. Next he married a dancing girl named Phulmati, a member of a family of nat or professional dancers of Sinatali and made her his chief queen. Thereafter she was named Phuleswari who also assumed the name Pramatheswari, a name of Durga. This Siva - Durga concept of the king and his consort arose from the growing Sakta influence under the spiritual leadership of the Parvatiya Gosain, of whom both the king and the queen Phuleswari, had become devoted disciples. This Bengali Gosain was the first to introduce in Assam the Neo-Smartha doctrine which created a friction with the Assamese Pandits. By his too much attachment to religion the king soon fell under the influence of the priests and astrologers who surrounded him and developed superstitious beliefs and became a fatalist. These spiritual guides and soothsayers predicted an end of his rule in the near future owing to the evil influence of what was called a Chatra-bhanga-yoga.³⁴⁶ He believed it and on the advice of the Parvatiya Gosain transferred the royal umbrella and the throne to his wife Phuleswari who was given the title of 'Bar-Raja'

³⁴⁵ K.T.P. : op.cit., p.50.

³⁴⁶ Id., p.37 ; K.T.P. : op.cit., pp.49,51. Chatra, royal umbrella, bhanga, fall, yoga, junction (of planets).

and was called also Raja.³⁴⁷ She, as Bar-Raja, meddled too much in matters of religion and customs which had eventually disastrous consequences to the State. She compelled the Thakuria Mahantas³⁴⁸ to bow down before the Gosains of the Brahminical Satras of Auniati and Garamur and adopt Salagrans with the Bhagavat, Bhagavatis and Deories for their worship.³⁴⁹ She caused the original images of gods and goddesses in the temples, including that of Phulbari, to be thrown away into the waters of the Lohit and substituted for them newly made stone and brass images. She became so bigoted in her particular religious creed that, according to one Buranji,³⁵⁰ she took great interest in converting the people to her line and even summoned the Sudra Mahantas and Medhis of the Vaishnava sect including the leading and respected Mahanta of Moamara, who did not follow the Sakta cult of Durga worship with animal sacrifices, to the festival of the Goddess and made them under compulsion to bow down to the image, take on the forehead sacred paint-marks of vermilion, red sandal-wood and blood of sacrificed animals and also accept nirmali and prasad. More than others, the Moamara Mahanta felt it to be an insult comparable to death and decided, in consultation with his disciples

347 It is said that on the advice of his priests he performed laksha homas and offered laksha valis at Kamakhya to ward off the evils of chakra-bhanga-yoga. He also fed numerous Brahmins and gave them precious presents. All these cost so much that the royal treasury was nearly exhausted. - vide BVR, II.

348 Followers of Senkar Dev's grandson, Purusottam Thakur. They are a sect of Vaishnavas in Assam differing slightly from the ordinary Mahapurushias in their tenets.

349 TB, p.38 ; for Auniati and Garamur Satras see DHAS, Transcript vol. V, Part IV, Tr. 94, pp.309, 315.

350 H.S.B : op.cit., p.71.

who were many, to seize the political power from the hand of such a ruler as, otherwise, religious freedom was at an end. The subsequent history of the Ahom rule was essentially a history of Masmaria revolts and their genesis is to be traced to the split caused in the society by the prevailing 'rival cults of Hinduism'.³⁵¹ Gadadhar's successors, by their blind adherence to sectarian religion contrary to his advice, soon fell victims to the influence of the priesthood. This paved the way to the rise of Phuleswari, who, by being a votary of a particular sectarian form of religion, lost all sense of good administration and started unduly and unnecessarily interfering with the religious and social practices of others. As rightly said by Gait she was 'more under the influence of the Brahmins than her husband'. She even suppressed the age-old Ahom custom of burying their dead and compelled them to take to cremation as among the Hindus. There was no freedom of conscience under her regime. The inevitable reaction to her maladministration was a series of revolts and civil war in the country that did not take long to bring about the collapse of the dynasty. ✓

Bar-Raja Phuleswari died after prolonged suffering from illness. She excavated a rectangular tank called Gaurisagar³⁵² near Namdang in Sibsagar with three temples (dols) built on its bank and dedicated to Siva, Vishnu and Devi, of

351 P. Gogoi : Future Status of Assam (Jorhat, 1945), p.6.

352 The tank is close to the Assam Trunk Road on its south. For details see Chang-rung Phukanar Buranji reproduced from original manuscript by Lila Gogoi in Asom Sahitya Sabha Patrika, 18. 1., 1959, pp.37.

which the Siva temple is the biggest in size. Its excavation commenced on the 5th Falgun, sak 1645 (A.D. 1723) and was completed after nearly five months. Her younger brother Harinath, who became a minister-first Bar-Gohain and then Barpatra - made his residence and garden at Kalugaon. This family is called Kaluganya Barpatra family. Harinath Barpatra with the king's permission excavated a tank at Kalugaon and built a temple (dol) on its side.³⁵³ The temple is known as Barpatra-dol.

Phuleswari's younger sister, Draupadi, was given in marriage to Jalal Bar-Gohain of the Miri Handikoi family, by whom she had two male children. After Phuleswari's death Siva Singha forcibly brought her away and made her his Parvati Kuanri giving her the name Ambika, which is again another name of Durga. She had a son by the king who was made Tipam Raja. Of the two sons by her former husband one was made Sadiyakhowa Gohain. Following her sister's example Ambika Devi excavated the second biggest and most famous tank in Assam, called Siva-sagar,³⁵⁴ near a village inhabited by the Kalanchuparia Gohains, in sak 1655 (A.D. 1733). The excavation was begun on the 18th Jaistha (May-June) in that year and completed for dedication on the 6th Baisakh next year. Three big temples (dols), were constructed side by side on its bank in the same year and dedicated to

353 K.T.P.: op.cit., p.51.

354 The tank, a spring-fed one, has an area of 129 acres under water and 257 acres with the four banks. The total length of the banks is 2 miles 190 yds. It is rectangular in shape. The height of the Siva Temple including the dome is 120 ft. and that of the dome alone is 7 ft. 6 inches. The temples on this tank were declared as protected by the Government of India on 25th March, 1913. - From an extract supplied by Shri B.C. Handique. See also Changrung Phukaner Duranji. See TP, p.38 ; E.S.B.: op.cit., p.71.

Mukhtinath Siva, Vishnu and the Devi. The Siva temple, with its large gold-covered dome, is the biggest and tallest of the temples in Assam.

When Ambika died the king made another lady, named Anadari or Akari Gabharu, his chief queen giving her the name of Sarveswari, which is also the name of the wife of Sarveswar (Siva). Anadari was the daughter of Laithapana Bar-Gohain's son, Salal Bar-Gohain, who had been already removed from that post. At the time the king took her to wife she was already the wife of Kalugonya Barpatra (Barpatra).³⁵⁵

Siva Singha died in 1744 in the month of November. With all his proclivity towards Hinduism he proceeded to Churaideo a year before his death and worshipped Sengdeo. That Siva Singha had three wives successively with the above names, who wielded regal authority, is confirmed by numismatic evidence. The inscriptions on the coins issued prior to 1724 bear the name of the king alone ; those between 1724 and 1731, with one exception, are in his name and Phuleswari's ; those of 1732 to 1736 in his name and Ambika Devi's ; and those of 1739 to 1744 in his name and Sarveswari's. Some coins were issued in the ~~the~~ name of the king during the intervals between the death of one queen and taking in of another. Both Ambika and Sarveswari were Bar-Rajas.³⁵⁶

³⁵⁵ TB, p.32 ; H.S.B. : op.cit., p.71.

³⁵⁶ Gait : op.cit., pp.183-184.

Estimate Of Siva Singha :

Siva Singha tried to follow the example of his father, but in doing so he fell hopelessly under the influence of sectarian priesthood and surrendered his great responsibilities of the State. With the adoption and spread of Hinduism under the patronage of the ruling family the society went through a rapid social change, the traditional Ahom system yielding place to a new pattern of relations based on the Hindu concept of social hierarchy. It was essentially a social revolution leading to the emergence of a new aristocracy of a composite nature with vested interests which has been existing more or less to this day. King Siva Singha and his queens devoted most of their time, energy and resources to erecting numerous temples and making very generous grants of land and labour - Brahmottar and Devottar with paiks and attendants - for the support of Brahmins and temples. Gait points out that nineteen out of the forty-eight inscribed copper-plates recording grants of land by Ahom kings refer to grants made by Siva Singha alone. The Ahoms, who still stuck to their own religion and customs, became during his reign a degraded class and the friendly tribes of the hills and the plains became socially cut off from the Hinduised Ahoms who abandoned the free use of meat and drinks and old social habits. The Deodhais and Bailongs resisted the change but to no effect. ^{This king} is noted for his elaborate system of espionage. During his reign the country was in peace, there being no more any invasion from outside. Only an expedition had

to be sent against the Daflas in January, 1717. The king developed taste in literary pursuits and in music and dance and invited foreign musicians to his Court. He wrote pious songs and learnt music. It is said that during his reign 'oppression was unknown' and punishments light.

32. Hso-Nen-Hpa alias Pramatta Singha (1744-1751) :

On the death of Siva Singha his younger brother, Shairing Raja, who was the second son of Rudra Singha, was raised to the throne on the 25th Agrahayana (December) of sak 1666 (A.D. 1744) by Pukhuriparia Sengmun Bura-Gohain and Rup-
or Bakata
chandra Bar-Barua of Bakatha/with the support of most of the nobles and officers of the Court. Thus 'king's brother has become king'.³⁵⁷ The new king, who was formally installed on the throne by the Deodhais, assumed the Ahom name Hso-Nen-Hpa and was given the Hindu name Pramatta Singha. Kaluganya Bar-patra-Gohain, Khamchang Dihingia Bar-Gohain and Dihingia Naoboicha Phukan had made an attempt to enthrone Siva Singha's son, Tipam Raja, with the help of a band of attendants and servitors of the royal household, but before the prompt and energetic handling of the situation by the Bura-Gohain and the Bar-Barua the attempt fizzled out.

The Kaluganya Barpatra-Gohain and K^hamchang Dihingia Bar-Gohain were dismissed from their posts for their opposition to Pramatta Singha's accession. The Tipam Phukan, the Dhekial Barua and a few others were severely punished on being

357 TE, p.41 ; K.T.P. : op.cit., p.52.

found guilty of grave offences at a trial. The king then appointed Erityunjay, son of Kenduguria Barpatra, as Barpatra-Gohain and Laithapana Bar-Gohain's son Khamseng Gohain as Bar-Gohain and Rajmantri. Further Sengmun Dura-Gohain was succeeded by Bailungia Sonai Dura-Gohain and Bakatial Rupchandra was succeeded by Candhela alias Kirtichandra of Bakatial family as Bar-Barua.³⁵⁸

Pramatta Singha's reign has no notable events. He erected the brick-built Rang-Ghar of the city of Rangpur with two gabled-roofs on the model of ordinary houses made of wood and bamboo. The Rang-Ghar stands just on the north side of the grand Trunk Road. He also rebuilt with bricks the structures in the city of Garhgaon. Among his other constructions were the temple (dol) of Sukreswar in the town of Gauhati and the temple (dol) of Rudreswar Devalay at North Gauhati. In the latter temples built in A.D. 1741, an image of Siva named Rudreswar was installed, and devottar lands and paiks were endowed for the maintenance of the temple. These paiks were settled in a village which was named Rudreswar-Gram.³⁵⁹ On a Hindu auspicious day, a census of the people of the country was taken.³⁶⁰

He respected the Mahantas and Gogains and gave them presents and made three copper-plate grants of land to religious institutions. But he was a follower of traditional Ahom customs. His coronation was held in strict conformity with the

³⁵⁸ TR, p.45 ; K.T.P. : op.cit., p.52.
³⁶⁰ AB, p.278.

Ahom formalities, the Deodhais and Bailungs officiating at it. He duly planted Aubars³⁶¹ and Batbars³⁶² at the Deoghars (temples) at Malai and Hukum respectively and also rebuilt the temples at Charaideo, Hukum Deohal,³⁶³ Malai Deohal, Bantung Deohal, Kanai Deohal and the Deoghar of Sengdeo at the request of the Deodhai, Mohan and Bailung Pandits. He even constructed anew his granaries, his residential buildings and his throne at the suggestion of these Pandits.³⁶⁴ These were significant changes and indicated a new trend of thought after what had been done by Siva Singha and his queens.

An ambassador from Tripura visited his Court in A.D. 1744 with a variety of presents. The Raja of Tripura hearing of the abilities of the Ahom rulers from his ambassador 'solicited the king's friendship, requested that his ambassador might be permitted to reside at Court and entreated favour of a similar compliment from Svargadev.'³⁶⁵ The king also dismissed the Sadiyakhwa Gohain of Kechukalia family for oppressing the Chutiyas and appointed Naoboicha Phukan of Naga Barpatra family to that post. The king died in October, 1751. ✓

33. Hso-Rem-Hpa alias Rajesvar Singha (1751-1769) :

Framatta Singha was succeeded by his next brother in the same year assuming the name of Hso-Rem-Hpa and the Hindu

361 A Banyan tree used to be planted to ensure the longevity of an Ahom king.

362 appears to be what is in Sanskrit batta-vrksha which is also a tree used for ensuring long life.

363 a place of worship and sacrifice.

364 AB, pp. 279-280.

365 Wade : op.cit., pp. 142-143.

name of Rajesvar Singha. Mohanmala Barjana Gohaindeo, whose claims of seniority entitled him to the succession after Pramatta Singha, was deprived of the right 'by the intrigue and violence of Kirtichandra Bar-Barua' on the ground that the Prince was 'pitted with small-pox'.³⁶⁶

Langmai Kalia and Konwoigaya Bhagi successively became Bara-Gohains under Rajesvar. After Khamseng his younger brother Numali and then Barjana of the Madurial Bar-Gohain family became Bar-Gohains. Irityunjay, his son Kambukantha and Lechengial became Barpatrasone after another. Numali Bar-Gohain held the office of Rajmantri, but after his death Lechengial Barpatra-Gohain was appointed Rajmantri. Dakatial Kirtichandra continued to be the Bar-Barua with his tremendous influence. Bijoy Tarun Duara's grandson, Bahikhowa, became Bar-Phukan who was succeeded in that post by his uncle, Tamuli.³⁶⁷

Manipur Expedition :

The greatest event of his reign was his Manipur expedition. In 1756, Alompra (Alaungpaya, 1752-1760), the founder of the last Burmese dynasty, the Konbaungset line, undertook in person the first conquest of Manipur and other neighbouring countries. He defeated the Manipuris under Barut Sha near Palel after a sanguinary conflict and captured the capital. But the Peguan revolt made him return to Ava

³⁶⁶ Wade : op.cit., pp.143-144. Gait : op.cit., p.186.
³⁶⁷ K.T.P. : op.cit., p.66. H.S.B. : op.cit., p.73.

after thirteen days. Manipuris then sought the help of the British and Mr. Verelst actually moved from Chittagong with a force but returned on political grounds. Manipur was in a most unstable condition being in the throes of political intrigues and plots. Jay Singh then took the reins of government, but soon another invasion of the Burmese under Shembegwen in 1765, overwhelmed his unhappy country. The Manipuris were defeated and Jay Singh fled to Kachar. The suffering inflicted upon the people of Manipur by the relentless enemies beggars description. Hsinbyushin (1763-76), ^{Alaungpaya} the third king of the dynasty, was then the ruler of Burma. The Burmese returned from Manipur 'after raising a man remotely connected with the royal family, called Eeringba, to the throne'. Jay Singh returned, and dispossessed the usurper, whose life was spared. As the condition of the country showed some improvement the Burmese again appeared in the valley of Manipur. A bloody battle was fought by Jay Singh near Langthabal lasting for three days. Jay Singh being completely defeated fled across the hills ^{towards} ~~to~~ Assam. The Burmese placed the Moirang Raja on the vacant throne as their puppet and returned to their country.³⁶⁸

Jay Singh³⁶⁹ made an urgent appeal to Rajesvar Singh for help by sending an ambassador from the Kachari Court where he took shelter. After consulting with his nobles the

³⁶⁸ Pemberton's Eastern Frontier of British India, pp. 43-44. See for details pp. 36-45 of his book.

³⁶⁹ Wade's Account calls him Krishna Chandra, but in other Chronicles of Assam as well in Pemberton's account the name is Jay Singh.

Ahom king permitted Jay Singh to come to Rangpur.³⁷⁰ When the latter came he, with his 'retinue of 4,000 men' was accommodated in a large camp on the banks of the Dikhau river. The king agreed to despatch in aid of the Manipur Raja an expeditionary force to oust the Burmese (Man-tarè) invaders from his country. The force was got ready, but initially several officers, who were summoned to lead the expedition to Manipur, 'pretended illness' and being detected were dismissed from their jobs. The king at last found Haranath Majinder Bhitarual Phukan, grandson of Rangachila Duara Bar-Phukan, respond to his call. He made Haranath Neog or Senapati Phukan (Supreme Commander) and in 1765 ordered him to proceed to Manipur 'through jungles over the Charaideo Hills'.³⁷¹ The force had 40,000 men both from mil and dual of got-paiks.³⁷² The Ahom king gave a send-off to Jay Singh with good wishes from his camp-house on the Sanai river and the latter undertook to guide the expedition across the hills. The troops then marched and entered into a dense forest in the middle of the Charaideo Hill where they ^{lost} confounded the way and the Manipur Raja also could not show the direction. The whole body of men were put to extreme hardships due to the difficult terrain. They had to grope through the jungles by opening up a route and their advance was unusually slowed down taking about one

370 According to Tungkhungia Buranji (p.50) the Kachari Raja also came with Jay Singh to the Ahom Court.

371 AB, p.233 ; K.T.P. : op.cit., p.54.

372 IL, p.52. In Wade's Account, (p.146), 54,000.

month in covering a small distance and so their rations of food were exhausted. Many of them perished from the effects of exposure and from diseases, such as fevers and dysentery and many were killed by the Nagas, through whose country they tried to push through. Some even died of snake-bite and bites of spiders. When this plight of his men was reported to the king they were ordered to return. As these men had to fight against nature in having to cut through the vast tangled masses of jungle-creepers the Assamese called it Lata-kata-ran.³⁷³ The king charged his general, Haranath Bhitarual Phukan, for his inability to overcome the Naga opposition in leading the force, but the Phukan gave a convincing reply that it was the Manipur Raja who had undertaken to guide the expedition along a short-cut but who had failed to show the way and it was not the fear of the Nagas that had caused the delay and suffering. The Phukan was exonerated and in 1767 a fresh force of 30,000 men under the command of Khangia Phukan, the son of the Bakatial Bar-Barua, proceeded under the orders of the king to Manipur with Jay Singh by way of Raha and the Echhari country. Leaving the main army at Raha Jay Singh proceeded with a force of 10,000 men from it under the command of the Naga Bara, Manmath Bar-Barua, and reached the Kerap river where forts were constructed and a Naga levy was raised. At the approach of the Ahom army the Burmese puppet ruler fled

³⁷³ literally 'creoper-cutting war'. See AB, p. 233 ; TB, pp. 51-55 ; Wade : op. cit., pp. 146-147. Wade says some six months were spent in covering only a part of the way.

away.³⁷⁴ The Raja was welcomed by the Nagas and probably did not require any more help from the Assam force which was sent back to Raha. With his Naga force the Raja proceeded to Manipur where almost 'all the people of the country welcomed Jay Singh as their king' and a few who opposed were arrested and put to death. He devastated Moirang, defeated and probably killed the Burmese puppet ruler and recaptured the throne of Manipur.³⁷⁵

At the king's order the Khengia Phukan, who was at Raha, sent Mamath Naga Bara to Manipur with two hundred men to see Raja Jay Singh and report about what he was doing. Mamath was received with great honour by Jay Singh who expressed his gratitude thus - 'I have regained my dominion through your king's favour. I cannot forget him as long as I live. I shall remain faithful to him and send annual tributes without failure ... I wish to offer my daughter to your king and intend to send her with you'.³⁷⁶ Jay Singh sent with Mamath his daughter, Princess Kuranganayani (fear-eyed), with two respectable Katakis, Miramani and Nanang, to the Ahom king with great pomp. When the party arrived at Tengabari the chief dignitaries of the Ahom Court went forward and escorted the Princess to Sonarinagar where there was a residence of the king. The king also proceeded to Sonarinagar where in Falgun, A.D. 1768, one Siremani offered the princess after

³⁷⁴ K.T.P. : op.cit., p.54.

³⁷⁵ AE, pp.288-289.

³⁷⁶ Ibid., pp.289-290.

performing Chaklang (marriage) to the king who made her his chief queen.²⁷⁷ The party of Manipuris (Magals), who were sent with the Princess by Jay Singh, were settled in the farm at Manaimaji village, called Magalukhat, in the area of Sarucharai in the lower valley of the Disoi.²⁷⁸ The Bakatiai Bar-Barua, Gendhela, was renamed Kirtichandra (Kirti = fame) by the king as the success of the Manipur expedition terminating with a matrimonial connection between the two royal houses of Assam and Manipur was due to his political ingenuity.²⁷⁹

Destruction Of Buranjis :

A commotion was created by a reference to Kirtichandra Bar-Barua's family as a jalam-bata (draper) family in a Buranji, called Chakaribheti Buranji, brought out by Humali Bar-Gohain. The term jalam-bata signified that the Bakatiai family was not pure Ahom. This aspersion made Kirtichandra call in his relations in the Nara country in Upper Burma to prove his pedigree as genuine. Having proved it he had the king issue orders for a grand collection of all the Buranjis in the houses of the nobles and officers for an examination and those of them, which contained this incorrect statement, were burnt away.²⁸⁰

²⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 290; ~~for the~~ supreme commander of the second expeditionary force, K.T.P. : op.cit., pp. 54-55. For chaklang see TB, p. 51.

²⁷⁸ TB, p. 51. In AD, the supreme commander of the second expeditionary force to Manipur is mentioned to be Khangia Phukan, son of Bakatiai Bar-Barua, but in K.T.P.'s Buranji he was simply Bakatiai Bar-Barua. In others the point is not clear.

²⁷⁹ K.T.P. : op.cit., p. 55 ; TB, p. 50.

²⁸⁰ K.T.P. : op.cit., pp. 55-56.

Other Events And Works :

✓ The Daflas raided the neighbourhood of Ghiladhari in 1758. This tribe was never reduced to complete submission. The whole foot-hill frontier was therefore defended by a series of forts to the south of which their access was prohibited. This measure proved effective and a deputation of the Daflas surrendered the captives earlier taken and also brought presents to the Ahom king. But the king, in rage, arrested the members of the deputation, which provoked their relatives. They retaliated by seizing a number of Assamese subjects and two cannon. Soon the king ~~xxx~~ came to terms with the Daflas, by which, in order to secure frontier peace, the latter were permitted to collect a form of black-mail at the rate of 'a pura of paddy and 320 cowries' from each family in the Dafla Duars.²⁸¹

A punitive force had also to be sent against the which subdued the offending villages. In November, 1766, Mikirs in July, 1766, the Kachari Raja, who was summoned to the presence of the Svargadev, refused to come. But the Bar-Barua marched with a force against him and reached Raha. The Raja being terrified came and made his submission. He was accompanied by Raja Jay Singh of Manipur (Mekheli), who had taken shelter at the Kachari capital Khaspur after being driven from his country by the Burmese as already said.²⁸² In 1769 the Jayanta Raja's movements on Assam boundary appeared to be hostile. The Bar-Barua marched against him with a body of troops

²⁸¹ Gait : op.cit., pp.186-187.

²⁸² AB, pp.286-287 for details.

and reached Raha. From that base he advanced to the Assam-Jayanta boundary and placed cannon for action. His action alarmed the Raja who made all haste to retreat to his capital.²⁸³

The question of selection of a site for the Raja's residence came up before the Pandit astrologers soon after the accession of Rajesvar Singha. The Deodhai Phukan and Bailing Phukan recommended Taimung and, the Brahmin and Ganak Pandits, Rangpur. The king followed the Hindu view and constructed a brick-built palace at Rangpur, ^{called Talatal-Ghar,} but later he also erected a brick-built residence ^(Talatal-Ghar) at Taimung (Dihing).²⁸⁴ He was also a great temple-builder. Among the temples (dols) he built were those at Vasisthasram, Manikarnesvar, Chitrachal and Negheriting. During his reign the Moamara Mahanta raised a big earth foundation called Barbheti in the low Malau paddy field. The big size of the Barbheti became a symbol of the numerous character of his disciples. Being apprised of it Rajesvar, who knew the Mahanta to be opposed to the Ahom king, won over to his side; as a balancing factor, the Silikhatalia Mahanta of Dihing by showing special honour to him.²⁸⁵

Kirtichandra Bar-Barua was an intelligent officer with a domineering attitude. King Rajesvar could not oppose any firm opinion of the Bar-Barua who was virtually the policy-maker. For his overbearing and ruthless temperament he was hated by many and once in 1763 in the month of Kartik an attempt was made on his life by a group of nobles including

283 AB, p.291.

284 Ibid., p.284. Garhgaon, in Tamuli Phukan's Buranji.

285 K.T.P. : ~~Garhgaon~~ op.cit., pp.56-57.

the younger son of the king, Naoshaliya Phukan, Dhekial Barua, the Brahmin Bezbarua and Taptapi Deka. At the principal gate of the royal residence they fell upon him and gave him some blows with their daggers, but Kirtichandra, though wounded, escaped death. The assailants were later arrested and some were mutilated and others put to death.²⁸⁶ Kirtichandra Bar-Barua also established one hundred and eighty Bebejeas and a hat (market) at Raha.²⁸⁷

Four Phukans visited Rajesvar Singha's Court as ambassadors of the Bar-Naras, who were received by the old Chiring Phukan and the Gohains and who referred to the Ahom king as 'Bhai-raja' or brother-king.²⁸⁸ They saw in the Ahom kingdom a large population, but comparatively less work. This king also imported foreign magicians who showed their performances at the Rang-Ghar. He took the saran from a Gosain, called Nati Gosain, a relative of the Parbatia Gosain, who was given a temple at Pandunath.²⁸⁹ He made seven copper-plate grants of land and paiks to Brahmins and temples.

Rajesvar had three sons already born to him while yet a prince and a fourth was born after he became king. The eldest was called Kandura Gohain, and was given Tipamia mel, the second was given the Saringia mel and the mel given to the third son was called Saru-mel. The fourth prince, who was born after his accession to the throne, was called pat-kunwar or throne-prince. Rajesvar took a tour of his

286 AB, pp.284-285.

287 DAB, p.130.

288 TE, p.47.

289 H.S.B. : op.cit., p.76.

kingdom visiting Gauhati, Majo, Bar-Nadi, Kalsila, Beki, Bardowa, Sariahtali, Kaliabar, Jatiarang, Dergaon and Gajpur, in all of which royal residences were constructed for his stay.²⁹⁰ These residences may be compared to the modern circuit-houses, but meant for the king alone.

Rajesvar Singha died at Devaragaon in A.D. 1769 in the month of Jaishtha. His body was cremated at Sonarinagar, and the bones were taken to Charaideo and put into grave. His cremation ceremony was performed according to Brahminical rites.²⁹¹

34. Hso-Nyeu-Hpa alias Lakshmi Singha (1769-1780) :

On the death of Rejesvar Singha his next and youngest brother, Namrupia Raja, called also Kalsilia²⁹² Gohain deo, aged fifty-three years, was installed as king in 1769 at the temporary royal residence at Devargaon by the Gohain, the Bar-Barua and the Phukens after a Council meeting amongst them.²⁹³ The new king assumed the Ahom name Hso-Nyeu-Hpa and the Hindu name Lakshmi Singha. Gait refers to a difference of opinion among the nobles regarding the choice of Lakshmi Singha whose legitimacy was doubted from the colour and features being entirely different from those of his father, Rudra Singha. Even the father himself had this doubt. Hence the Madurial Bar-Gohain and a few others supported the claim of Rajesvar's eldest son while Kirtichandra Bar-Barua was in

²⁹⁰ TE, pp. 45-46.

²⁹¹ AB, p. 293 ; TE, p. 56.

²⁹² Probably from his birth at Kalsila camp.

²⁹³ TE, p. 57.

favour of Lakshmi Singha. Finally the Bar-Barua prevailed and the others conceded.²⁹⁴

It is said that the Parbatiya Gosain refused to recognize Lakshmi Singha on the score of his alleged illegitimacy. The king became a disciple of a Sakta Gosain, named Ramananda Acharyya, of this country and settled him with land and other grants. The Acharyya is known as Pahumariya Gosain who was also the first of the Na Gosains.²⁹⁵

Soon after Lakshmi Singha's accession his best friend, Kirtichandra Bar-Barua, insisted on the propriety of accomplishing the destruction of the sons and descendants of all his brothers to make the throne safe from usurpation. The king reluctantly authorized the Bar-Barua to deprive the royal descendants of their noses, eyes and ears and to banish them into the hills of Namrup. It was speedily carried out by the Bar-Barua except in the case of twelve princes who enjoyed the king's favour, but the king himself deeply repented his cruelty.²⁹⁶

Revolt Of The Moamarias :
Their Seizure Of Power :

Since the advent of the Parvatiya Gosain the religious trend in Assam took a serious turn and Phuleswari's action inflamed the situation. Among the local sects of Hinduism and even between the Hindu and Ahom priesthoods there was no

294 Gai : op.cit., p.189.

295 H.S.B. : op.cit., p.77.

296 Wade : op.cit., p.151.

friction worth the name. The Ahoms sacrificed animals, such as cows and buffaloes, and worshipped their own gods at Charaideo, yet the Vaishnava Satras flourished side by side and received patronage from the Ahom kings except when these Satradhikars went out of their way to dabble in politics. The Ahom religion was not at all a proselytising religion; neo-vaishnavism spread peacefully; but the introduction of Saktaism from Bengal created a different situation. Prior to that there was religious peace, because there was no imposition. But the imported cult was aggressive. No king could have thought of forceful conversion without the sanction of the spiritual preceptor, but it was attempted by the royal disciples of the Parvatiya Gosain and hence the Moamaria flare-up. Early insurrections were merely incidents of steady preparations among the faithful disciples of the Moamaria Gosain, whose resolve it was to deal a fatal blow at the Ahom government after the insult he had been put to by Phuleswari. Continuance of Kirtichandra in the office of Bar-Barua during Lakshmi Singha's reign drove them irresistibly to a trial of strength. The climax was reached when, once, the Moamaria Gosain was abused with insulting epithets by the Bar-Barua for being indifferent to him while showing respect to the king. The Maran Chief, Nahar, was also beaten by the Bar-Barua and his ears cut off for a similar reason.

The Marans, particularly those of Hatichungi, who, according to some accounts,²⁹⁷ had been suppressed on the advice

297 H.S.B : op.cit., p.77.

of Kirtichandra since the time of Rajesvar Singha, were now prepared to fight and reports came that they set up a parallel government with their own Raja, Bar-Barua and Phukāns and trained up troops. A force was sent by Lakshmi Singha to subdue them under the command of one Bez-Barua. But the Ahom force was defeated by the Marans and Bez-Bara narrowly escaped. Another force, despatched with Haranath Bhitarual Phukan in command, encamped on the southern bank of the Dibru river, constructed a bridge over it and crossed to the other side. The Marans suddenly fell upon them killing many while the rest went inside a stockade.²⁹⁸ Meanwhile the Moamaria Gosain received full co-operation of the Marans and Kacharis of Namrup who became his disciples. The Marans contacted in Namrup the three exiled Princes - Batgharia Barjana Mohanmala Gohain, brother of Rajesvar Singha, who was exiled by that king, Maju-Gohain and Saru-Gohain, sons of Rajesvar Singha, who were exiled during Lakshmi Singha's reign - and persuaded them to join their revolutionary army to oust the unjust and oppressive government of Lakshmi Singha and Kirtichandra Bar-Barua. The latter, they said, was particularly instrumental in mutilating and banishing the Princes and oppressing the Moamarias. They promised to make Barjana Gohain king. The three Princess then accompanied the Marans in their march against the royalist forces. Mahanmala Barjana Gohain arrived at the place, where the Bhitarual Phukan was invested, and appealed to him

298 TE, p. 58.

to join with them and accept him as his lawful king. The Phukan refused to accept Mohanmala as king with the result that he was imprisoned and kept under guard. Sadiya was also devastated by the Marans, who killed the Sadiyakhwa Gohain in a battle, but who were later defeated by the Ahom general Daimukhia Rajkhowa.²⁹⁹

The victorious Marans then, in consultations with the Ahom Princes (Gohains), proclaimed Raghav as Bar-Barua and one Khora named Nahar, Deo-Gosain, who had two wives of historic fame named Radha and Rukmini. Having thus set up their own machinery for conducting operations these Marans, contrary to their earlier assurances, murdered the two sons of Rajesvar, Saru-Gohain and Maju-Gohain by secretly administering poison. Their next step was to set up Nahar's son, Ramananda or Ramakanta as their king by-passing Barjana Gohain, who was confined in a house under the surveillance of their guards.³⁰⁰ But they were giving out that Barjana Gohain was their king, the strategy being to draw the support of the people in general in capturing the government. Thus Raghav Maran succeeded in receiving submission of the villages to the east of the Dihing river including Tipam. The Marans also played upon the minds of the people by singing an awe-inspiring song that Ashtabhuj, Saptabhuj and Chaturbhuj³⁰¹ were their protectors.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid*, pp. 58-59 ; Wade : *op.cit.*, pp. 153-154.

³⁰⁰ *TE*, pp. 57-60.

³⁰¹ So-called eight-armed, seven-armed and four-armed.

In October, 1739, the royalist troops were defeated in several engagements by Raghav on the north bank of the Brahmaputra causing a great alarm in the capital. The Bar-Barua advised the king to leave the capital and go for safety to Gauhati. Raghav marched with his troops on Rangpur and arrived at midnight after the king's departure. The king was pursued by his men and captured at Sonarinagar. He was brought back to the capital and confined in the temple of Jaysagar. Raghav's men also rounded up as many nobles and officers as could be traced and put some of them to death, keeping the rest in confinement.³⁰² Raghav then took to wife the king's Manipuri Queen, and a number of daughters of the nobles. Meanwhile the Bar-Barua, being sent from Sonarinagar by the king, met the Moamara Gosain and prayed for the king's life. But the Gosain chained him and kept him under guard. At this time Raghav occupied Rangpur and informed Ramananda (or Ramakanta) that - 'Rangpur has been taken, the king too has been seized and kept under guard'. Immediately Ramananda, his father Nahar Khora, Radha and Rukmini proceeded with their Maran troops to Rangpur and occupied it in the month of Agrahayana, sak 1691 (A.D. 1769). At first the Moamaria Gosain's son Bangan was going to be placed on the throne of Rangpur, but the Gosain forbade it and on his advice Ramananda was installed as Raja. Two other sons of Nahar were made Rajas of Tipam and Saring in imitation of the Ahom system. Bangan, however, assumed the

302 Gait : op.cit., p.191.

title of Namrupia Raja.³⁰³ Nahar had the title of Pitri Raja.

The Marans preserved the entire structure of government as set up by the Ahoms, but filled the posts with Moamaria Maran officials. Thus they appointed three Marans as Bar-Gohain, Bura-Gohain and Barpatra-Gohain, a kandi (archer) as Bar-Phukan and two Moamaris as Sadiyakhwa and Marangikhwa. Only the old Salal Gohain was allowed to continue. Phukans and Rajkhowas were also appointed from amongst them. In face of this revolutionary change of government Haranath Senapati Phukan escaped to Silmari in Bengal.³⁰⁴

Soon after completing these arrangements, Raja Ramananda went to Khutiapota, the abode of the Moamaria Gosain. He there put to death the Ahom Bura-Gohain, Bar-Gohain, Bar-Barua Kirtichandra, Bar-Phukan, Deka Phukan and Kathkatia Barua of Luthuri. He also arrested the Brahmin Gosains of Auniati, Dakshinpat, Garamur, Kuruabahi, and others and also the Thakuria Gosains and exacted large sums of money from them. He even cut off the nose and ears of the Vagish Bapu of Auniati. Common people in great numbers were summoned and made disciples of the Moamaria Gosain.³⁰⁵ Coins, dated sak 1691 (A.D. 1769), were struck in the name of Ramakanta (Ramananda). Actually Raghav was the man behind, who managed all affairs at Rangpur in the capacity of Bar-Barua and directed the policy of the Maran government.

303 AB, p.302; Gait : op.cit., p.191; TB, p.65; Wade : op.cit., Chap. V for further details.

304 TB, p.66.

305 Ibid., pp.66-67.

Counter-revolution :

After a few months of Maran rule a dissension arose among their chiefs. Raghav wanted the insignias of royalty including the Kekura-dola (royal palangquin) as the real conqueror of Rangpur, but Ramananda refused to give him that status. Another called Bayan Deka, who organized the Moamarla armed forces, also aspired to the throne. At the same time the Ahoms regained consciousness and became prepared for a return blow. One Ramkrishnai, in collaboration with Kurunganayani, killed Raghav in April 1770, on the night before the Bohas Bihu festival. It is said that the Manipuri queen herself gave the first stroke with a sword. Ramananda escaped but was caught and put to death. Lakshmi Singha was released and placed on the throne. Then there began a vigorous persecution of the Moamarlas. The Moamarla Gosain was seized and put to death. Other insurgents were hunted down and killed. There were fresh risings of the Moamarlas, but, after some headway, were crushed. The whole fabric of Moamarla government broke down. Lakshmi Singha's installation ceremony was then performed with great pomp for which there had been no moment of peace. 306 Kunwoiganya Chanashyem became his Bura-Gohain and Bailung his Bar-Gohain and Rajmantri. Maran became Barpatra. Bhadrasen of Kakatiyal family was made Bar-Barua after Kirti-chandra. Kashi and Laher of Dihing became Bar-Phukan successively. Maran was succeeded by Kenduguria Rudrenyar as Barpatra-

Gohain and Edabaria of Handikoi family became Bar-Barua after Bhadrasen.³⁰⁷

Kalita Phukan :

People of Narayanpur complained against the oppressions of the Kalita Phukan of Kesamati. The Phukan was dismissed in December, 1774. He took shelter at Tamulbari on the north bank and thought of making himself an independent ruler. Soon he proclaimed himself king under the name Mirhang. He made a throne and ascended it. He was after some labours captured at Dhekerijuli, but escaped by bribing. But he was again captured and executed.³⁰⁸

In 1779, a Nara chief of Khamjang, who was given settlement near Sadiya, started a rebellion with a band of Chutiyas and Mishmis killing the Sadiyakhwa Gohain, but retreated into the forests when ^apunitive expedition was sent against him from Rangpur.

Lakshmi Singha was decidedly a man of weak character, who yielded, against his will, to some of the diabolical plans of his Bar-Barua. His mind vacillated between the Ahom and Hindu views and eventually he submitted to the latter. He was put out of his wits by Raghav Maran's victorious march on Rangpur and took to flight at Kirtichandra's bidding betraying his own indecision and limidity. His followers left him for his complete lack of stamina. He was back to power without

307 K.T.P. op.cit., p.58 ; T.B. pp. 83-84.
308 AB, pp.318, 320-324.

Kirtichandra. At Na Gosain's suggestion he performed the wor-
 ship of the Hindu Tantric Goddess Tara with ~~great~~ ^{an elaborate} ceremony
 and at an enormous cost to the great displeasure of his
 hereditary priests, the Deodhais and Bailungs. He built a
 copper temple within the compound of the Na-dol of Devar-
 gram. His mother built the Bagi-dol. Even the Pahumaria
 Gosain's son erected the Gauriballav-Devalay. The king also
 built the Janardan-dol at Asvakranta and excavated the great
 Rudrasagar tank.³⁰⁹ He died of dysentery in sak 1702 (A.D.
 1780) in the Hindu month of Paus (Dec.-Jan.).

Decline And Fall Of The Kingdom (1780-1826) :

35. Hso-Hit-Pong-Hpa alias Gaurinath Singha (1780-1795):

Lakshmi Singha was succeeded by his eldest son,
 Loknath, who assumed the Ahom name Hso-Hit-Pong-Hpa and the
 Hindu name Gaurinath Singha. He made his residence at
 Garhgaon. According to Capt. Welsh's account he was 'only
 fifteen years of age at the time of his succession'. He
 cremated the body of his father and entombed the ashes at
 Charaideo. He became a disciple of a son of Pahumaria Rama-
 nanda Acharyya Gosain.³¹⁰ Rudresvar Barpatra was appointed
 Rajmantri. Ghanashyam continued to be the Bura-Gohain. His
 Bar-Gohains were successively Bhisunarayan and his son,
 Nirbhoynarayan, of Maduria family and Gangaram of Sataialia
 family. Later Nirbhoy again became Bar-Gohain on removal of

309 K.T.P.: op.cit. p. 59.

310 K.T.P. : op.cit., p. 59.

Gangaram. Edabaria was afterwards dismissed and Bhagati of Nantial Handikoi family was appointed as Bar-Barua, who was again succeeded by Jaynath of Bakatial family and Baskatia Laban. Haranath Senapati Phukan, who in the meantime returned from Silmari, was given the office of Bar-Phukan. He was succeeded by Cogoi, Medhi, Sivanath, Bura Chetia and Ghinal Badanchandra, (son of Haranath).³¹¹

**Fresh Revolt Of The Moamaris :
Their Temporary Ascendancy :**

In A.D. 1782 the Moamaris again rose in rebellion and set fire to the Singari-Ghar at Gargaon. They also attempted to burn away the capital, but were repelled by the Bura-Gohain and the Senapati Bar-Phukan after a sharp engagement and the morale of the panic-stricken people was restored. Redresvar Rajmantri fled to Gauhati. The king, who narrowly escaped from the Moamaris, appointed Ghanashyam Bura-Gohain as Rajmantri and large numbers of Moamaris were put to death for their rebellious activities by the Bar-Barua under the king's orders. Further steps against the Moamaris came up for consideration and the Bar-Barua, rejecting any conciliatory approach to win them over as suggested by the Bura-Gohain, advocated their wholesale massacre to get rid of their repeated attempts to overthrow the government. This policy was endorsed by the vindictive king. A general massacre was then ordered and several thousands of Moamaris were put to death.³¹² This step

³¹¹ Ibid, pp. 59-60, 119 ; TB, p. 85.

³¹² Gait : op.cit., p. 196.

simply aggravated the situation. A Mahanta of Jakhalabandha Satra took lead in organizing a subversive movement at Jaysagar, but he was captured and his eyes were plucked out and three of his followers were fried to death in oil. Soon another rebellion, that of the Marans, broke out under one Badal Gaonbura, but it, too, was quelled. In the meantime a very powerful revolutionary force was built up by the Moamarias or Mattaks on the north bank of the Lohit. It broke out in rebellion in 1786 and swept down across the Lohit and the Brahmaputra defeating the royalist forces, sent against it, at the Garaimari-bil and other places. It sacked the Garamur Satra and set fire to the houses, routed the Lower Assam troops sent by the Chiefs of Rani, Luki and Beltala and advanced towards Rangpur.³¹³ The remnants of the Ahom forces on the north bank crossed to the south bank and joined the Bura-Gohain³¹⁴ who was at the Sonari post with another force. The Bura-Gohain was attacked and defeated by the Moamarias and forced to retreat to Gaurisagar. The Moamarias occupied Garhgaon and destroyed it. Gaurinath was at his Rangpur palace and the Bura-Gohain joined him, followed by the Moamarias, who devastated the country through which they marched. Gaurinath sent Katakis frantically seeking help of the Bar-Phukan and Manipuri, Kachari and Jayanta Rajas. But before any help

³¹³ TB, pp.94-97 ; Gait : op.cit., pp.196-197. In TB, Rani, Luki and Topaguchia (instead of Beltala) are mentioned.

³¹⁴ appears to be Purnananda, son of Chanashyam Bura-Gohain who, in the meantime, had died. See Kashinath Buranji p.60, and TB, p.91.

could come the Moamarias, advancing along the Janji river smashing all opposition, arrived at the gate of the capital, Rangpur, and put the king to flight. Purnananda Bura-Gohain, who was left in charge of Rangpur, retreated after gallantly defending the city for some days. Meanwhile Gaurinath reached Gauhati, met the Bar-Phukan and arranged reinforcements under the Pani Phukan for the Bura-Gohain. The Bura-Gohain was forced to retreat as far as the Kaziranga river when he met the Pani Phukan with 15,000 men advancing from Gauhati.³¹⁵ He marched back and fought the Moamarias with victoris and reverses over two years. Nandang, Gaurisagar, Meleng, Ladaigarh and the Disoi river were the main theatres of war in this protracted campaign. Purnananda Bura-Gohain, on whom the main responsibility of dealing with the Moamarias rested at the time, constructed what is called Bibudhi-garh to fight the insurgents. The Kachari and Jayanta Rajas did not respond, but the Raja of Manipur, gratefully remembering the sacrifices of Rajesvar Singha, 'marched with 500 horse and 4,000 foot to Nowgong, where he was met by Gaurinath Singha'.³¹⁶ But the Manipuri troops could not give a good account of themselves in their fight against the Moamarias and had to retire with heavy losses. There also cropped up a number of local petty chiefs who asserted their independence.

At Rangpur the Moamarias set up Bharath Singha as king and appointed Sukura as his Bar-Barua. The Hatisingi Marans acknowledged Sarbananda as their Raja, of whom Godha was

³¹⁵ Gait : op.cit., pp.197-198.

³¹⁶ Ibid., p.200.

the Bar-Barua. They ruled over the territory to the east of the Dihing.³¹⁷ Coins issued by Bharath Singha and Sarbananda have inscriptions testifying to their rule. Bharath's coins are dated 1791, 1792, 1793, 1795 and 1797 and those of Sarbananda 1794 and 1795. Bharath Singha described himself on his coins as a descendant of Bhagadatta, while sarbananda assumed the title of Svargadev.

During a brief stay at Nowgong his followers offended the local people by their constant demands for supplies and harsh treatment. One Hinduri Hazarika, leader of the local Moamarias, organized a band of rebels and attacked Gaurinath's camp. Gaurinath fled to Majuli and took refuge in the Auniati and Dakshinpat Satras for some time and then went to Gauhati. Here again the Raja of Darrang, Krishnanarayan, at the head of a force of Hindusthanis and Bengalis, occupied a large part of North Kamrup including North Gauhati. He was an enemy of Gaurinath who had earlier slain his father, Hamsanarayan, the Raja of Darrang, and appointed Vishnunarayan in his place. Krishnanarayan ousted Vishnunarayan and proclaimed himself Raja.

The Moamarias enacted a reign of terror killing people, burning villages and destroying crops. As a result famines broke ^{out}. Many people left their homes and emigrated to the country east of the Na-Dihing river and even to the Hukawng Valley in Burma and some 'became voluntary slaves to the Singphos in return for sustenance given them'.³¹⁸

317 TB, p.115.

318 Johnstone : Capt. Welsh's Expedition, p.6.

Arrival Of Captain Welsh :
Liquidation Of The Moamarla Regime :

Being helpless Gaurinath appealed for ~~help~~ a battalion of Sepoys # to Mr. Lumsden, the Collector of Rangpur. In this, a merchant named Raush, who was a farmer of the salt revenue at Goalpara, and Mr. Douglas, Commissioner of Koch Behar, aided Gaurinath by writing to the British authorities in his favour. Mr. Raush had been robbed of Rs. 45,000 worth of goods when proceeding by boat from Gauhati to Goalpara. King Gaurinath begged through Raush for the earliest despatch of the battalion. In spite of the difficulties arising from the British policy in the affairs of other countries the Governor-General, Lord Cornwallis, evolved a line of policy to help Gaurinath in this great disorder in his kingdom by driving out the Bengal mercenaries from Assam. Accordingly in September, 1792, Captain Thomas Welsh, with Lieutenant Robert Macgregor as adjutant, was sent with a force of 12 companies of Sepoys, each company having sixty Sepoys and officered by Europeans. Capt. Welsh arrived at Goalpara on 8th November, 1792. Gaurinath while escaping from Gauhati, met him on the 19th of that month below the Nagarbera Hill.³¹⁹ The main object, for which Capt. Welsh was sent, was to suppress the freebooters whom ~~Krishna~~ Krishnanarayan had brought up from Bengal, ~~and British territory~~ to invade the Ahom territory. But at Gauhati he came up face to face with the Moamarla rebellion. Capt. Welsh crossed to the

³¹⁹ Ibid, pp.13-14.

north bank and defeated Krishnanarayan's Barkandazes and brought him to submission. Then he turned against the Moamaras who suffered defeats at Jorhat and other places and fled away before the British Officers, who liberated Rangpur on the 18th March, 1794. Gaurinath reached Rangpur on the 21st March and Capt. Welsh held a grand darbar with the king and the noble. Last efforts of the Moamaras to attack Rangpur and its ~~neighbourhood~~ neighbourhood were liquidated by Capt. Welsh by destroying their camps and scattering them away to the east. Gaurinath also made a commercial treaty in 1793 with the British. It was the first treaty ever made by the British with any Assam Chief. But the Company's government never ratified and published it, on the ground that the Raja's government was not sufficiently strong to ensure its observance. With the coming of Sir John Shore as Governor - General non-interference became the basic British policy and in May, 1794, Capt. Welsh returned to Dargal carrying from Assam huge quantities of ornaments, gold and silver coins and other metals and cloths.³²⁰ The Dura-Gohain managed to retain two Sepoys, Dina and Phakirchand, belonging to the Captain's force, with whose help he trained up a considerable body of soldiers after the fashion of the Sepoys from Bengal to meet the threats of the Moamaras and others. A number of flint-

³²⁰ 400,000 pieces of gold ornaments, 400,000 pieces of silver ornaments, gold to the value of 20,000,000 rupees and an immense quantity of copper, bell-metal, brass, cloths etc. They also took away 2,000 boats, one tusked elephant, one female elephant and 4,000 guns. - See TB, p.129. AB, (p.356) says: 'The captain and his wife and the Firingis were given sufficient quantity of gold and silver as presents and were directed to go back'.

guns were purchased for the purpose. Instructions were issued to form also a body of wrestlers. There was no money to pay the Sepoys. The king ordered the Sepoys to collect money by force which they proceeded to do by extorting gold and silver from the villages in Gauhati and from the Gosains and Mahantas. On one occasion the Gosains and Mahantas had to decide at a meeting to collect money and they actually collected one thousand rupees and paid the amount to the Bengal Sepoys.³²¹

Influence Of Foreign Mercenaries :

Soon after the departure of Captain Welsh foreign mercenaries (Barkandazis) began to dominate Assam politics. It was possible owing to the weakness of the central authority. Chetia Bar-Phukan rebelled against the king with the help of one Jamadar Hazar Singh Bangal who was the chief of a mercenary band. Hazar Singh was paid by extorting money from Pahunaria Na-Gosain's brother. Senapati Phukan's son was made Bar-Phukan by Hazar Singh for a price of 60,000 rupees, which the former paid by robbing the temples, including Kamakhya and Madhava, of their gold articles. Chetia Burah Phukan, who rebelled and fled away, was seized with the help of Bengal Sepoys and beheaded at Jorhat under the king's order. Gauhati could be recovered from Hazar Singh Bangal only by importing Subedar, Niamat-Ullah with a force from Calcutta.³²²

Gaurinath died of dysentery at Jorhat in sak 1717

³²¹ AB, pp. 356-357.

³²² Ibid.

(A.D. 1795) on the 22nd Stravan. His body was cremated.

Character And Works Of Gaurinath :

Captain Welsh describes Gaurinath Singha as 'a poor debilitated man, incapable of transacting business, always either washing or praying, and when seen, intoxicated with opium'. He ascribes all the evils to the Bar-Barua, who also was against asking for the aid of British troops. He further reveals that 'the Raja ... stated his wish to throw himself unequivocally into the arms of the British Government, and asked for assistance against all his enemies and for more troops'.³²³ He also mentions that Gaurinath had fondness for low favourites and was imbecile, ignorant, capricious, cruel and oppressive.³²⁴ Gaurinath's blind and excessive devotion to the way of life prescribed for him by his religious preceptor to the utter neglect of the responsibilities of the State was the chief cause of his downfall and the loss of prestige of his kingdom. His father, Lakshmi Singha, was, of course, primarily responsible for this debased outlook, but Gaurinath further worsened it, thereby falling at the mercy of the British for the first time in the history of the Ahom rule. It also ushered in the Bar-kandazi influence in the kingdom.

With all this Gaurinath did certain pieces of good work of abiding repute. He was the first monarch to abolish the institution of the annual sacrifice of human beings to Pishasi

³²³ Captain Welsh's Report to the Government (29th November) describing the Raja of Assam and the state of affairs generally. See also John Stone : Capt. Welsh's Expedition, p.17.

³²⁴ Capt. Welsh's Expedition, p.6. His letter to Governor-General, 6th Feb., 1794.

('the Daughter' of Girasi-gira or Assamese Bura-buri), called also Tameshari Mai ('the Mother of the Copper Temple') and Kechaikhati ('the Eater of raw flesh') in the neighbourhood of Chunpura in Sadiya. She is worshipped by the Bargaya Khel. The Deories of the temple had every year to obtain the sanction of the Ahom king to offer human sacrifice, but Gaurinath abolished the practice. The Deories say that from this abolition the Ahom kingdom began to go from bad to worse.³²⁵

Until the reign of Gaurinath, the Assamese annals had been very imperfectly kept. But he 'caused a commission of Nora astronomers and other learned persons to be deputed to Mogaung to examine the histories of their race in possession of the Shan Buddhist priests of that place, and to verify the books (or traditions) brought into the country by Chau-ka-pha. The examination completed, this commission re-wrote the Ahom history, in Assamese, and extended it backwards from Sam-lung-pha's conquest of Asam to the founding of the first Shan capital on the Shweli river,...'³²⁶ These Pandits also worked out that eleven Tausingas³²⁷ (i.e. 660 years) elapsed between the descent of Khun-Long and Khun-Lai (A.D. 568 or 569) and the founding of the Ahom dynasty in Assam by Hso-Ka-Hpa, which gives A.D. 1228 or 1229 as the date of that foundation.

He personally followed Hindu religion and married the daughter of Kalia Deka of Dihingia family according to

³²⁵ W.B. Brown : An Outline Grammar of the Deori Chutiya Language. (Shillong, Assam Secretariat Printing), 1805, pp. IV-VII.

³²⁶ Ney Elias : History of the Shans, p.10.

³²⁷ A cycle of sixty years, each year or lakni having a name of its own.

Brahminical rites³²⁸ and not by chaklang. But he could not give up his Ahom faith. For he once ordered the Ahom Pandits 'to perform Umpha Saragpuza' and the ceremony was performed in which 'one white buffalo, one white cow, and many white fowls, ducks, and pigeons were sacrificed to the gods. All heavenly gods were duly worshipped'.³²⁹

36. Hso-Ning-Hpa alias Kamalesvar Singha (1795-1810):

On the death of Gaurinath Singha his son Kinarem Gohain ascended the throne assuming the name Hso-Ning-Hpa and the Hindu name Kamalesvar Singha. Rudresvar's son Durgesvar was made Barpatra and Gangaram Bar-Gohain, succeeded later by Narahari Bar-Gohain. His Bar-Baruas were successively Bhadari of Handikoi family and Srinath of Duara family. Gendhela Rajkhowa of Handikoi family was appointed Bar-Phukan. He is also known as Kaliabhomora Bar-Phukan and the king conferred on him the title of Pratap-ballav for effectively putting down the Dundia (or Dumdumiya) rebellion in Kamrup under Haradutta and Viradutta. Mahamantri Purnananda continued to be the Bara-Gohain. His son Chandrakanta was made Shairingia Raja on the death of the former one.³³⁰

Soon after his accession Kamalesvar had to take steps to put down a serious rising in Kamrup. It was headed by two brothers, named Haradatta Bujarbarua and Biradatta Bujarbarua who collected motley band of Kacharis, Punjabis and

³²⁸ TB, p.92.

³²⁹ AB, p.356.

³³⁰ K.T.P. : op.cit., p.62.

Hindusthanis and who were secretly aided, it is said by the Rajas of Koch Behar and Bijni hoping thus to seize Kamrup from the Ahoms. In the first phase of the rising nearly the whole of North Kamrup fell into their hands. These rebels were nicknamed Dumdumiyas. One account says Mr. Raush was looted and killed by them in Darrang.³³¹ The pressure on Kamrup was possible because Niamat-Ullah Subedar with his force was transferred from Gauhati to Jorhat for helping the Bar-Barua, Kaliamhomora Bar-Phukan, unable to get help from the capital where the Sepoys were engaged, raised a force of his own by recruiting Hindusthanis and from local levies obtained from the Rajas of Beltala and Dimarua. With this force he crossed to the north bank and attacked and defeated the rebels in several engagements. Hara Datta and Viradatta fled, but were traced out and put to death and the rebellion collapsed. This brave act earned for the Bar-Phukan the title Pratapballav.³³²

During Kamaleesvar's reign a regular standing army was formed by the efforts of the Bura-Gohain and both Jorhat and Gauhati had its garrisons. One Chandra Gohain of the Bura-Gohain family was appointed Captain of the army.

In A.D. 1797 about one thousand Barasiringias revolted in Sadiya. The Khanti Bura Raja, Pani-Naras, Fakials, Miris Mishmis, Muluks, Tekelia Nagas and Abars joined with them. They attacked the Ahom head-quarters at Sadiya and speared to death the Sadiyakhowa Gohain and took away the

³³¹ TB, p.136 ; Gait : op.cit., pp.218-219 ;
H.S.B. : op.cit., p.83.

³³² Gait : op.cit., p.219.

wives and children. Purnananda Bura-Gohain sent a powerful expedition with a company of Sepoys. The rebels were defeated and leaders taken captive.

There were fresh insurrections of the Moamaras with whom the Daflas joined but the Bura-Gohain crushed them with a strong hand. The Daflas submitted and the Moamaria Mahanta, Pitambar, was captured and put to death. There was another outbreak of the Moamaras at Bengmara in 1799 but the rebels were put to flight by an expedition sent against them. After the success of the punitive actions against the rebels there was peace in the country for the remaining period of the reign of Kamalesvar. Under him more or less peaceful diplomatic relations were carried on with Jayanta, Kachar and Bhutan and even with the Shan State of Mong-Kawng. This king restored Rangpur to its former condition and also built up the new capital of Jorhat. He excavated the river Bhogoi in order, says Gait, 'to provide this town (Jorhat) with a better water-supply! He also improved the communications in and about Jorhat by constructing the Na-Ali, the Rajabaha-Ali, the Mohbandha-Ali, the Kamarbandha-Ali and the Suchandebandha-Ali. With the king's order Kaliabhomora constructed a copper-house at Kamakhya in Gauhati and also a Devalay at Chatrakar.³³³ Kamalesvar died of small-pox in sak 1732 (A.D. 1810) on 5th Magh.

37. Hso-Den-Hpa alias Chandra Kanta Singha (1810-1818):

The deceased king's brother, the Shairingia Raja, was

raised to the throne by Bura-Gohain Purnananda. He assumed the Ahom name Hso-Den-Hpa and the Hindu name Chandra Kanta Singha. The deceased king's body was cremated.

Purnananda Bura-Gohain continued to be Rajmantri. On the death of Kaliabhomora, Badan Chandra of Duara family was made Bar-Phukan. After the flight of Badan, Ghanashyam of Dihingia family was appointed Bar-Phukan. Narahari of Kapaumaria family became Bar-Gohain and Durgesvar, son of Kenduguria Rudresvar became Barpatra. ³³⁴

He made a dancing girl, named Padmavati of common origin, his Parvati queen. He also had a bosom friend named Satram who became his constant companion and conspired against the Bura-Gohain. Such taste and indulgence on the part of Chandra Kanta became a cause of friction between him and the Bura-Gohain. Further the Badan Chandra was suspected to have, rightly & wrongly, collusion with Satram. The Bura-Gohain sent men to arrest Badan Chandra, but the latter fled away to Calcutta from where he left for the capital of the Burmese king with the help of the Calcutta Agent of the Burmese Government. King Chandra Kanta himself wanted to get ride of the Bura-Gohain's domination in his government. He wrote secret letters to Badan somehow to secure some help in order to remove the Bura-Gohain from power.

Burmese Invasion, 1816-1824 :
Treaty Of Yandabo, 1826 :

It may be noted that the Burmese king Bodawpaya (1781-1819), whose capital was at Amarapur, had married Rangili Aiden (Rangili Mepaya) of Ahom Duara family in 1797. Badan was at Amarapur for sixteen months and through the Ahom queen persuaded Bodawpaya to assist him with a force. Towards the close of the year 1816 an army of about 8,000 men was sent from Burma.³³⁵ Of this army 5,850 were Shan levies from Mong-Yang, Manmo (Bhamo) and Mong-Kawng. The army was led by Badan Chandra by the Patkai - Nong-Yang route and arrived at Namrup. By that time its number swelled to about sixteen thousand. At the battle of Ghiladhari the Bura-Gohain's army which was sent to resist was defeated. Just at this time the Bura-Gohain died in a mysterious way. A suspicion is that Rajmantri Purnananda committed suicide by swallowing diamonds. With his death the resistance collapsed. His eldest son Ruchinath was then made Bura-Gohain and Rajmantri by the nobles. The Burmese advanced^{and} occupied Jorhat after defeating the Assamese again near Kathalbari. Ruchinath fled away to Gauhati. Chandra Kanta was allowed to rule, but Badan had the dominating voice. He became Bar-Phukan again and hunted out and killed many relations and supporters of the late Bura-Gohain. Having established order the Burma army

³³⁵ 'Mānar Asm Ākraman (Prathambār)' by P. Gogoi in Tai Sanskrit 1.1. (Gauhati), 1956, pp.25-35. It was translated from Khamti Buranji by C.K. Gohain.

returned home in April 1817 with a large indemnity and a girl for their king. Soon a friction arose between the Bar-Barua and the Bar-Phukan and the tension became so great that the Bar-Phukan Badan was assassinated by one Rup Singh Bangal engaged by the other side. Chandra Kanta was then ousted by the Dura-Gohain Ruchinath, and Brajanath, a great grandson of Rajesvar Singha, who was then at Silmari in Bengal, was ~~xxx~~ invited to occupy the throne. Chandra Kanta fled to Rangpur. But as Brajanath had suffered mutilation, his son Purandar Singh was raised to the throne ^{seized and a part of his right ear was} in 1818. Chandra Kanta was cut off in order to disqualify him from again becoming king. Many men of Badan's party fled to Burma and complained to the Burmese king against the actions of their enemies.

A fresh force from Burma under the command of Ala Minge again appeared in Assam in February 1819. It defeated Purandar's army led by Ruchinath at Machkhowagarh and occupied Jorhat. Purandar and Ruchinath fled to Gauhati in March 1819. Chandra Kanta, who joined the Burmese, was again placed on the throne formally, after which the Burmese General returned home. Before their return the Burmese Commanders made a number of changes among the officers of the Court. Several were put to death as enemies of Chandra Kanta Singha. One Kheremia Kachari, named Patāl, was made Bar-Barua and Badan's son Janmi, Bar-Phukan. Janmi was replaced successively by Bhadrachandra and Lamodar. But Patāl Bar-Barua made a fort at Dighalighat of Jaypur with the object of fighting the Burmese. At that time the Burmese king sent Minge Maha Tiloa with royal ornaments and dresses to the

Court of Chandra Kanta Singha. When Tiloa saw the preparations against them he killed Patāl. At this Chandra Kanta thought the Burmese to be hostile and proceeded to Gauhati in April, 1821, leaving Kalibar Bar-Gohain to fight the Burmese. Kalibar was defeated and made captive and Chandra Kanta was sent for, assuring security in order to be made king. Furandar Singha, meanwhile, went to silmari in the British district of Rangpur (Bengal) and applied for the Company's help to enable him to regain the throne. He even offered to be a tributary Raja under the Company.

Chandra Kanta could not be persuaded to come back. The Burmese then filled the vacant throne with Prince Jogesvar Singha, son of Raja Konwar. Chandra Kanta went to Bengal. Both Furandar and Chandra Kanta tried to drive out the Burmese from Assam. In this situation, in the spring of 1822, Mingi Maha Bandula, a veteran Burmese general, came to take the command. Chandra Kanta gave a gallant fight to the Burmese at Mahgarh but was defeated with heavy casualties and fled across Goalpara to the British territory again. The Burmese General warned the British Officer at Goalpara against giving any protection ^{to} the fugitive. The Burmese then devastated the country and created a reign of terror by their widespread acts of plunder, torture and killing of the inhabitants of the country. The country relapsed into anarchy.

With the outbreak of the first Anglo-Burmese War the British troops entered Assam and drove out the Burmese. The British forces also landed in Burma, defeated the Burmese

and forced them to sue for peace. Now by the Treaty of Yandabo, 24th February, 1826, by the Article 2 His Majesty the king of Ava 'renounces all claims upon, and will abstain from all future interference with, the principality of Assam and its dependencies'.

After keeping the province under their direct management for a few years in 1833 Upper Assam except the Matak country was granted to Raja Purandar Singha with whom a treaty was made by which 'The Raja Poorunder Singh agrees to pay an annual tribute of 50,000 Rupees of Rajah Mohree coinage to the Honourable Company'. The territory assigned to Purandar Singha was 'the portion of Assam lying on the southern bank of the Burrumpooter to the eastward of the Dhansiri River, and on the northern bank to the eastward of a nullah immediately east of Bishenath'. But as he fell deeply into arrears in the payment of his tribute and declared his inability to meet the engagements by which he had been bound the British Government assumed from him the power in A.D. 1838. Since then Assam became a part of British territory. The royal families were pensioned off.

CHAPTER VIII

THE AHOM SYSTEM OF ADMINISTRATION

The Ahoms, a section of the northern Tai, who secured a permanent footing in Assam in the first half of the thirteenth century, introduced an administrative system which had a number of features quite new to the people of this land. It was a form of hereditary monarchy with a Council of Ministers and a Great Council of chief nobles and officers of the State, a kind of magnum concilium, to give general guidance to the king in all matters of major importance to the State.

The King :

The Ahom king is called Chao-Hpa, Svargadev or Svargadeo being its Assamese equivalent. Here Chao is given the meaning of 'King' and Hpa that of 'Heaven' together meaning 'heavenly king'. Thus Svargadev has a sense of divinity attached to the dignity of his office. This way of interpreting terms of a different language appears to have been the result of proselytising activities of Hinduism and an earlier king of the dynasty was given the appellation of Svarganarayandev. Yet at a later stage the story was built up by the orthodox priesthood of the Hindus that the line of kings from Svarganarayandev had a low origin which was to be

traced to a scandal of Indra, the Lord of Heaven.¹ There is nothing of the kind in the writings of the race itself. The word Chao in Tai is simply a term of honour or dignity attached to the name, not only of a king, but also to that of any great person or noble. All great Chahans and officers had Chao before their names. Hoa means simply a king or a ruler. The kings or Rajas of other races, having no divine or heavenly origin, were also called Hoes by the Ahoms. The Kachari kings were called Hoes by the Ahoms and Rajas by the Hindus.

The Ahom rulers did not originally claim to be heavenly and attached any divinity to themselves, though in their legends they are said to have originally descended from heaven. Even heaven had a different meaning to them. It was as earthly as the earth itself and their ancestors physically marched down from that high region to the low countries. In the Brahmaputra valley alone they were looked upon as 'born of the gods' (deo hana)² by the local peoples, either from their superior physique and brightness and fairness of colour of the body or from their superior might. The Ahom dynasty is called Indrayansi by the Brahmins and hence heavenly. But the ruling dynasties of the same race elsewhere in the Far East are never so called. The Tai dynasty of Tali was connected with Asoka by the Buddhists. The Sawbwas of Burma have nothing to do with Indra and heaven.

¹ See ante.

² K.T.P. : op.cit., p.11.

The theory was locally developed in Assam by the time of Lara Raja in the latter part of the seventeenth century A.D. that, being of divine origin the king's person was to be sacred and perfect, free from any blemish or mark of injury, whether from disease or accident. A prince having such a mark or defect was to be debarred from ascending the throne. It logically led to a novel device of mutilating rival princes ^{being kings.} in order to disqualify them for ~~the throne~~. This was supposed to prevent ambitious princes from making a bid for the throne through conspiracy against the ruling king. The mutilation consisted in most cases in splitting the ear, 'a comparatively merciful way of rendering the sufferer ineligible'.³ It was probably thought to be less harmful than a fratricidal war for power which might otherwise take place as among the Mughul princes. But the practice of mutilation ^{for such a purpose} was unknown to the Ahoms and not mentioned previous to the reign of Lara Raja. The Ahom princes were themselves generals and fought with enemies in the battle-field and fighting princes cannot keep their persons uninjured. A historic example is Hso-Klen-Hong or Garhganya Raja, who, being seriously wounded in his fight ~~against~~ against Turbak, had to temporarily retire to the capital for treatment. His son, Hso-Kham-Ipa or Khora Raja, was so much hurt when not yet king that he had a limping ^{gait.} ~~gait.~~ But no body raised the question of debarring them from accession to the throne. But, contrary to the theory of divine origin and

³ Captain Welsh's Expedition to Assam by J. Johnstone, (Shillong), 1912, p.2.

invulnerability of the king's person, many monarchs of the dynasty were deposed and put to death by rival chiefs who were not all of royal origin. Among others, it is important to note in this connection the killing of Udayaditya and Ramadhvaj by Debera, Gobar Raja and Hso-Jin-Hpa by Banhgaria Atan Bura-Gohain and Hso-Doi-Hpa at the bidding of Laluksola Bar-Phukan.

The Ahoms were essentially a fighting and ruling race bodering less about religion than material prosperity and national freedom. They were more concerned with the maintenance and promotion of the physical and mental vigour of the race and efficiency and defence power of the administration than anything else. But at a later stage, particularly from the time of Udayaditya, the Ahom rulers fell under the influence of Hindu priesthood to such an extent that religion began to assert its primacy over the concerns of the State and during Siva Singha's reign its domination reached the climax with all its serious repercussions on the administration of the country. They were also a literary race from very early times. Among others, they produced a mass of historical literature of political importance, which are properly called Chronicles. These Ahom Chronicles, written in a racy prose style in the Tai script and language, give a systematic record of contemporary events and also of the services of the members of the community to the State in a chronological order maintaining a link between successive generations.

With a few remarkable exceptions, the kingship was hereditary in the male line, normally the oldest son succeeding

to the throne after the death of the ruling king. The eldest son may be superseded by the younger ones if the former be found imbecile or incompetent. A great departure from the rule of succession is noticed in the case of the sons of Rudra Singha, who became kings one after another, to the exclusion of the line of Siva Singha, according to the death-bed injunction of the deceased king. In failure of sons and brothers the throne went to the sons of the brother next in seniority to the former monarch. Failing any heirs in these two lines the chief nobles of the Court elect one amongst the nearest relations of the late monarch, paying some attention to the claims of nearest consanguinity, but 'more to those of personal merit'.⁴ In this connection it should be remembered that from Hso-Hom-Mong's settlements of princes with estates or mels early in the sixteenth century there arose five Royal Houses called Saringia (Shairingia), Tipamiya, Dihingia, Namrupia, Tungkhungia and later also Samaguria according to the names of their respective provinces. Hso-Hom-Mong also created a principality or Rajaship for each of the three provinces of Tipam, Shairing and Namrup.⁵ The successors to the throne were therefore first chosen from amongst these Rajas in order of seniority and personal merit. If these fail then a selection of a prince is made from the other royal houses by the Gohains (Ministers) with the approval of the Great Council of the Gohains, Phukans, Baruas

⁴ J. Johnstone : Captain Welsh's Expedition to Assam, p. 2.

⁵ See ante.

and Rajkhowas of the State which is usually held in the Great Chamber (Haw-long : Bar-chara) of the royal Court. Only a prince of the blood-royal can become king and none from outside. 'If an ordinary being be sent down to the earth', said Lengdon in selecting Khun-Long and Khun-Lai, 'he will not be able to be a worthy ruler. He, whose forefathers were never rulers, can hardly be expected to be a king'.⁶ Banhgaria Atan Bura-Gohain refused to become king as he was not a prince and did not inherit royal blood. Only Laluksela Bar-Phukan acted in contravention of this time-honoured principle and aspired to become a king.

The king's coronation is held with elaborate ceremony and pomp. The king, mounted on a male elephant and accompanied by his principal wife riding on a female one, proceeds to plant a pipal tree (Ficus religiosa) on the hill, Charaideo, 'the seat and centre of the ancient worship' of the Ahom conquerors with the temples of their gods and graves of their kings on the site below. In this journey he suspends the Chumdeo round his neck, takes the sword, Hengdong, girt round his waist and wears a cap made of feathers of the sacred bird Kai-sheng (Deo Kukura)⁷ and he is accompanied by all the principal officers of the kingdom and also by a large part of the army and civil population.⁸ Francis Hamilton says that having planted the tree he enters the Pat-Ghar, Holong-Ghar

⁶ AB, p.10.

⁷ PAB, p.11.

⁸ Account of Assam by Francis Hamilton (DIAS, Gauhati) 1940, p.17.

and Singari-Ghar one after another.⁹ Gait also mentions three houses. But it is doubtful whether three houses were erected for the purpose. Both Gait and Hamilton agree that it was the Singari-Ghar where throne of gold was placed for the king to ascend. But the Pat-Ghar should actually be the house for the throne (Pat = throne). The Pat-Ghar was, in all probability, later added for the performance of the Hindu form of abhishek of the Hinduized Ahom kings getting priority over the other two structures. For the Raja and his queen 'first enter the Pat-Ghar, where some water is poured on them from a shell called Dakshinavarta Sangkha, the mouth of which is turned the way contrary to that of the shell, which is usually sounded by the Hindus, in order to attract a little notice from the gods'.¹⁰ The two royal persons then enter the Holong-Ghar and sit on a raised bamboo platform (hanglang) under which is placed one of each species of animal that can be procured, such as an elephant, a horse, a cow, a deer, a hog, a fowl, a duck, a snake, an insect, a fish and even a man and others. Then the consecrated water was poured over the royal couple, and fell on the animals below. In this there is mention of the 'water from nine Tirthas', separately kept in golden vessels medicated with plants called Sarvausodhi and mahausodhi, which is also poured. This is a clear instance of a mixed form of ceremony in which both the Ahom and Hindu priests took part. After the

⁹ F. Hamilton : op.cit., p.17.

¹⁰ Ibid., p.17.

bathing was over the king and the queen finally proceeded to the Singari-Ghar, the king holding in his grip the sword Hengdang, and just before ascending the Singari-Ghar he killed a buffalo.¹¹ Having entered the chamber they took their seats on a throne of gold and the leading nobles came up and offered their presents.

The descendants of Chao Hso-Ka-Hpa, the founder of the dynasty in Assam, were alone eligible for the king's office which was normally hereditary, but, on the failure of the direct royal line or on grounds of merit, the king was elected by the Ministers with the consent of the Great Council. He was the highest executive officer of the State and presided over every department. He distributed honours, titles and properties including spoils of war without the concurrence of the Council of Ministers but in consultation with them where and he deemed fit. He appointed/dismissed the Bura-Gohain, the Bar-Gohain, the Barpatra-Gohain, the Bar-Barua and the Bar-Phukan, the five highest officers or Counsellors of the State next to the king, who also constituted the Council of Ministers. He appointed, with the consent of the great Gohains, the three Governors of the frontier provinces, namely, the Sadiyakhwa Gohain, Salal Gohain and the Marangikhowa Gohain and such as the Phukans, Baruas, Rajkhowas, and Bar-Baras. The appointments of the Princes as Rajas to the various mels (princely estates),

¹¹ Earlier custom was to kill a man, a criminal having been selected for the purpose, but 'since the time of Rudra Singha a buffalo had been substituted'.

such as Tipamia, Saringia and Namrupia, were also made by the king in his discretion. All the above Ministers, Governors, Rajas and officials had their distinctive official uniforms, conveyances and insignia according to rank and precedence. The king also appointed and accredited ambassadors to foreign countries and received ambassadors and envoys from them.

The king was the Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces of the State. He appointed and dismissed the field Commanders of the army and the navy and ordered the disposition of the forces and decided questions of strategy in actual warfare with the help of his experts, who moved with the king, and issued commands from time to time. He declared war and concluded peace. But in these matters of high policy he used to consult not only with his Ministers but also summon the Great Council for its advice and consent.

Regarding law to be applied he was mostly guided by customs. The ancient Code, which was brought down by Khun-Long and Khun-Lai, was greatly ^{modified} ~~modified~~ towards the latter part of the Ahom rule. The Hindu Law, as it existed in Burma and India and also tribal customs must have shaped the character of the original Ahom Law and customs, which evidently became more rigorous in the later period.

He was also the supreme judge to whom the Bar-Barua, who was the head of the judiciary and keeper of king's conscience comparable to the Lord Chancellor in England, ^{referred} ~~referred~~ for approval all his decisions on cases, appellate or original, before announcing them. He decided only such cases as were to be decided by the king.

The king could have, if he wanted, two more queens over and above the Bar-Kunwari or Chief queen. The second was called Parvati Kunwari and the third Rainsingia Kunwari. The daughters ~~of the~~ of the Ahom nobles alone had the privilege of enjoying the status of any of these queens. For a breach of this convention Chandra Kanta Singha incurred the displeasure of his Court nobles.¹² He may have wives of inferior status who are called Chamia Kunwaries. The royal house-hold had a gradation of officers and attendants for its different departments.

Council Of Ministers :

The Council of Ministers, or Patra-Mantri as it is called by the Hindus, consisted of five great Counsellors or Ministers - the Bar-Gohain, the Bura-Gohain, the Barpatra-Gohain, the Bar-Barua and the Bar-Phukan - appointed by the king. They were individually responsible to the king. They had no collective responsibility in the modern parliamentary sense but they discussed matters of policy and of day-to-day administration collectively in the king's Council Chamber. Of these Counsellors the Bar-Phukan lived in his distant head-quarters in Lower Assam. Before the acquisition of Gauhati and during certain intervals afterwards his head-quarters were at Kajali and later at Kaliabar, but with Kamrup annexed they were firmly established at Gauhati, which, because of its

¹² He married a dancing girl named Padmavati, who was the daughter of a Hindu bhakat (devotee) of Bengenanti Satra and whom he made Parvati Kunwari - See Harakanta Buranji, p.85.

strategic importance, developed into a sub-capital of the kingdom with a regular Court of the Bar-Phukan. He could order execution of criminals by drowning or clubbing. He was not empowered to behead or use the sword. Due to the distance he could not always attend the Council meetings, but attended them when important questions were discussed. The same reason gave ~~him~~ greater autonomy to his administration. The Bar-Phukan had an immense responsibility - that of defending the kingdom by guarding the main gateway of Gauhati on the invasion route from Mughul India. He was, of necessity, the Viceroy and Supreme Commander of the Lower Assam armed forces, both land and naval. He was also to be a proved diplomat capable of conducting diplomatic relations with Indian and border States. He had in his Court six Phukans to aid and advise him in the efficient discharge of his functions and they were the Pani-Phukan, the Deka-Phukan, the Dihingia-Phukan, the Neog-Phukan and two Chetia-Phukans. The Pani-Phukan was ~~also~~ a naval officer second in rank to the Nao-boicha Phukan. He superintended 6,000 paiks employed in cultivation, fishing and manufactures during peace time. The Dihingia and the Neog-Phukan were the immediate assistants of the Bar-Phukan. ~~were~~ The territory over which the Bar-Phukan exercised his jurisdiction extended in the east to Kaliabar and comprised Kamrup, Darrang, Nowgong, and the Des-duars of the south bank.

The Bar-Barua, who had equal status with the Bar-Phukan, had to be always present at the royal Court. For he was ^{the} Chief Secretary, Chief Revenue Officer, and the head of the

judiciary. All appeals from lower Courts lay to him. For all cases, other than those which could be decided by the king alone, there was a judge called the Nyaysodha Phukan who was supposed to be a legal expert. The Bar-Barua's jurisdiction extended to all the territories to the east of Kaliatar except the provinces under the great Gohains. He was also endowed with an estate. He commanded 14,000 paiks. Gait points out that his perquisites consisted of an allowance of seven per cent of the number for his private use, together with the fines levied from them for certain offences, and the fees paid by persons appointed to minor offices under government. He had no power to order execution of criminals, but he could slightly mutilate his own servants of his estate. The Bar-Phukan and the Bar-Barua could appoint kandi Saikias.

The three great Gohains had equal status. One of them was appointed Rajmantri. On all occasions their concurrence regarding important affairs was indispensable. They proclaimed the Monarch and could depose him in the instance of incapacity or great delinquency. In the provinces allotted to each, they exercised most of the independent rights of sovereignty. They could sanction death sentence on criminals, but had no right to order execution by beheading or shedding blood. Hence the practice was to kill by drowning. In the event of war or the execution of public works they furnished their quota of militia or labourers. In case of the Gohains the succession was usually hereditary except when the son of a Gohain was incapacitated by want of ability or any other cause.

The Bar-Barua had a Council of six Phukans, called Charua Phukans, namely, the Naoboicha Phukan, the Bhitaraal Phukan, the Na Phukan, the Dihingia Phukan, the Deka Phukan and the Neog Phukan. In addition, two other Phukans attend the Council as occasions demand and they were the Nayasodha Phukan and the Changrung Phukan.¹³ The Naoboicha Phukan was the head of the navy. The Pani-Phukan at Gauhati was the second in command. Another Phukan, called Siring-Phukan,¹⁴ was in charge of the State ceremonies performed according to the Ahom customs.

A number of new Phukans were created in the later period, particularly since the time of Siva Singha, some of whom were Brahmans. For instance, the Khangia Phukan, Tamuli Phukan, Deoliya Phukan, ~~and~~ Parvatiya Phukan and Jalbhari Phukan were all Brahmans. As the departments increased in number these new officers had to be created and put to charge of them.¹⁵ Military stores were under the superintendence of the Khargharia Phukan. The Naysodha Phukan represented the Sovereign and received appeals from the Bar-Barua and Bar-Phukan. Next in rank to the Phukans were the Baruas, of whom there were many. Among them the Gandhia Barua was in charge of the records department and the Majundar Barua was the publicity officer, who had also to read letters from foreign countries and prepare replies to them as directed by the king. He was the keeper of the Lion

¹³ Chief Engineer. He was in charge of constructions of buildings, maidams (graves), ramparts, temples etc.

¹⁴ Chief Priest who presides over the Ahom ceremonies, the most important of which are the rik-khan (calling back life), Umpha and Saipha are worth mentioning. Rik-khan was performed generally after a victory in a war.

¹⁵ For details see Francis Hamilton's Account of Assam, pp. 20-21.

Seal of the king which was affixed to the correspondences issued from the king's Court. The king's private treasurer was called the Bhandari Barua who had a Kayastha Bhandari as his assistant.

There were twelve Rajkhowas who were always in attendance at the Court of justice (Bar-Charua) ready to be employed as umpires to settle disputes. There were other Rajkhowas also.¹⁶ They were heads of certain districts where they supervised the works of paiks and administered justice. In times of war they were to join the army with their respective contingents. The Katakis were envoys or ambassadors, the Kakatis were writers and the Dalois were astrologers.

Great Council :

The Great Council was summoned when its advice and consent were deemed necessary on a big issue, such as war and peace or selection of a new king on the failure of the regular line or any disorder and insurrection in the country.

The offices of Tipam, Saring and Namrupia Rajas were not hereditary, but were conferred upon the reigning king's heirs and near relations. These Rajas exercised the same powers as the great Gohains. They relieved the king of less important duties, and assisted him in the more weighty affairs of State.

In Upper Assam there were no vassal chiefs, but with the annexation of Darrang and Kamrup, the Rajas and Zamindars - particularly the Raja of Darrang, Rani Raja, Luki Duar Raja,

¹⁶ They are enumerated in Harakanta Buranji, p.96.

Beltala Raja, Dimarua Raja and Gobha Raja paid revenue and furnished their quotas of men for service. They administered justice within their respective territories, but could not pass sentence of death, and there was right of appeal against their decision to the Bar-Phukan.

So far as the neighbouring hill-tribes and hill-states of those days were concerned, the Ahom rulers thought it expedient to abstain from interfering with their internal social and political order. On the contrary, it was their policy to promote good neighbourly relations with the hill-people by creating all possible kinds of facilities for intercourse with them. For instance, roads were constructed for communication with the hills, open marts were organised for the growth of border trade and friendship between the hills and the plains-people ; and even fertile tracts of agricultural land in the border areas within the Ahom territory were granted to the hill-neighbours, such as the Nagas, to raise food crops to meet their food deficiencies.

✓ Paik System :

The whole male population was divided into squads of ~~for~~ four men, each called a Got or unit, both for service as soldiers during war and as labourers during peace. Since the reign of Rajesvar Singha, the number of men forming a Got in Upper Assam had been reduced to three. All persons below the age of 15 years and above 50 years were exempted from service. The levy of the first man in a Got was called a mul, of the second, a dowal, and of the third a tewal. When the mul levy was in active service the other two were to ~~remain~~ remain ready in their respective

areas and, when called, must join duties immediately. Registers of paiks were maintained and their vacancies promptly filled. The order of the paiks worked like a standing army which could be called forth and mobilized speedily whenever necessity arose by the Kheldar. The paik system alone enabled the Government to carry out schemes of extensive constructional works throughout the kingdom. The paiks were organized into khels which are comparable to work-guilds, each doing a particular kind of productive work for the State. Of these paiks 20 men were commanded by a Bara, 100 men by a Saikia, 1,000 men by a Hazarika or Hazaree, 3,000 men by a Rajkhowa, 6,000 men by a Phukan. The Bar-Barua and Bar-Phukan as Commanders-in-Chief of Upper and Lower Assam respectively, had each the particular command of a body of 12,000 men and, it is said the number was raised to 14,000 in case of the Bar-Barua. The Phukans, Rajkhowas and Hazarikas were nominated by the king, but with the advice and concurrence of the Gohains. The Saikias and Baras were appointed by their respective Phukans and Rajkhowas. The privates might demand through the regular channel the dismissal of their Baras and Saikias and the appointment of an officer of their own nomination. Each officer administered justice to the men under their command with an appeal to his superior officer, and ultimately to the Nyay-sodha Phukan. From these services were exempted the descendants of the hereditary nobility and all who possessed offices under the Government. 'The administration of justice', says Mr. David Scott in his Notes on Welsh's Report on Assam (1794), 'is said to have been speedy, efficient, and impartial in former times,

but a good deal corrupted since the commencement of the disorders occasioned by the Moamaria insurrection'. The next higher group above the paiks and below the officers and nobles were the Chamuas and promotion, according to merit, was given from the paiks to Chamuas and from the latter to officers including the Bar-Barua and the Bar-Phukan, only the great Gohain being restricted to the descendants of the original Gohain families who came with Hso-Ka-Hpa.

No record was kept in criminal trials, but in civil cases a summary of the proceedings was drawn out and delivered to the successful party. Trials were conducted before the Bar-Barua or other delegate as President. No Vukeels were employed, the parties or one of their relations appearing personally. Even the three Gohains were subject to the jurisdiction of the Bar-Barua's Court. Later a practice developed of deriving a revenue from the commutation of the services of the paiks for a money payment varying from 6 to 18 rupees per Got and of exempting from personal service on the score of caste or rank.

Every family was given a rent-free economic holding, sufficient for food supply, by per capita allotment of nearly three acres (two puras) of the best paddy lands in addition to homestead plot for houses and garden. The rice lands were redistributed from time to time and for the purpose census was regularly taken. There was thus no opportunity in this sector for the growth of a landed class on the one hand and a landless proletariat on the other. David Scott rightly remarks that during the Ahom rule 'there is no division of the land in Assam amongst

a comparatively small number of individuals such as seen in feudal countries of Europe and in Bengal, and the cultivated soil may be considered as the property of the paykes or peasants owing service to the State to whom it is allotted.¹⁷

¹⁷ K.T.P. : op.cit. pp.77-105; Johnstone : Captain Welsh's Expedition to Assam, Chap.I, pp.1-4; A. Mackenzie: ~~(Calcutta), 1884~~ Appendix A. Welsh's Report on Assam, 1794, in The North-East Frontier of Bengal (Calcutta), 1884, pp.377-394; Francis Hamilton : An Account of Assam (Gauhati), 1940, pp.14-41; Gait : op.cit., pp.233-246.

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